The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Tuesday, September 7, 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.

Public Comment
There were no public comments.

Board Appointments
The Avery Fire Association has approved Mark Taylor as their representative.

Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Dennis Aldridge to appoint Mark Taylor to the Avery County Fire Commission as the representative for the Avery Fire Association. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

There are applications to review for the Avery Fire Commission and the Morrison Library/AMY Regional Library. These applications will be considered at the next board meeting.

Subdivision Approval – The Village at Eagles Nest Lots 69 through 77
The Avery County Planning Board approved the plat for The Village at Eagles Nest (P.U.D.) units 69 through 77 on August 30, 2021. The planning department inspected the site and all sedimentation and control best management practices are installed and the approved grading plan has been followed. The road widths and emergency vehicle turn-arounds meet the guidelines of the Avery County Subdivision Ordinance. The road grades have been certified that the road grades do not exceed 18 percent as required per said ordinance.

Chair Hicks questioned how many lots this was. Derrick Buchanan, representative for Eagles Nest, stated that this approval was for 9 lots. Mr. Buchanan stated that this is a phased development and after this there will be 25 more lots. Dennis Aldridge questioned if all these will be a P.U.D. Mr. Buchanan said everything in the Village would be a P.U.D. Wood Hall Young, Jr. questioned if in a P.U.D. the lot was less than
¾ of an acre. Mr. Buchanan answered that it can go down to just the footprint of the foundation outline. Mr. Young said if it only is a footprint then is there room for water and sewer and all the setbacks. Mr. Buchanan stated that there were only setbacks in a P.U.D. on the exterior lines. Tim Phillips questioned if the cul de sacs were big enough for the fire trucks to go into. Mr. Buchanan said that the cul de sacs are all standard turnarounds plus there are pull outs every 750 feet along the roads. Mr. Aldridge stated that the density issue still concerned him. Mr. Buchanan said the P.U.D. gives you acreage that is never going to be touched. Mr. Aldridge said you are still having more dwellings in that than if you had the traditional setbacks and regulations. Mr. Buchanan said not in this one because there are several that are 1 ½ acre lots.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Tim Phillips to approve the Village at Eagles Nest (P.U. D.) units 69 through 77. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Tax Administrator Report – Bruce Daniels

Tax Collections Report
The Tax Collections for the month of August 2021 is $321,278.72.

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

Releases
The Releases for the month of August 2021 is $8.49.

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Tim Phillips to approve the Releases for the month of August 2021 as presented. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Sales
The Sales for the month of August 2021 was 126 sales. The sales for the same time for 2020 was 146 sales.

Public Hearing – CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization Program 1st Public Hearing—Michelle Ball
Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to go into the Public Hearing regarding the CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization Program at 4:02 p.m. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Michelle Ball stated that the purpose of the public hearing was to give the opportunity for citizen input concerning the upcoming application submission for CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization funds.

Avery County plans to apply to the NC Department of Commerce for CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization Program funding. There is $10 million budgeted for the program with a maximum award of $750,000. The funds would be used to assist low-
income residents with housing assistance in the form of home replacement. Eligible homeowners would receive safe and sanitary housing in the form of a new manufactured double-wide on a permanent foundation and the old, dilapidated home would be demolished. The County hopes to assist up to 5 homeowners with the funding if it is awarded.

Eligible applicants must own and occupy the home full-time and have a household income less than 80% of the County median (ex. $37,450 for a 2 person household). Eligible properties must be located in Avery County; however, properties located in the floodplain cannot be assisted with CDBG funds.

This will be the second round of CDBG-NRP funding Avery County has applied for since the Department of Commerce reinstated the program in 2018. The County is in the final stages of the 2018 project and was just awarded a 6-month extension to finish a couple of homes that were delayed due to COVID-19. The project has been able to provide homes for 4 families in Avery County by replacing their old house with new manufactured housing. The average cost per replacement for the program (not including administration costs) has been approximately $117,394.58. The program also provided funds for emergency repairs (<$5,000 per home). The County contracted with WAMY to manage the ER applications and funding. They were able to assist several homes with small repairs.

A committee has been assembled to help with the planning process and selection of the recipients.

Chair Hicks questioned where the families stayed while they were out of their homes. Ms. Ball stated that they asked them to stay with family but there are some funds in the project to put them up in a hotel. Dennis Aldridge questioned when the grant would be awarded. Ms. Ball stated that it would be between December and February.

There were no public comments.

**Motion by Dennis Aldridge and second by Tim Phillips to go out of the Public Hearing at 4:12 p.m. regarding the CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization Program. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

**Vaya Health Updates – Dustin Burleson**

Dustin Burleson, Community Relations Regional Director for Vaya Health, presented updates regarding Vaya Health to the Board. Mr. Burleson explained that Vaya Health was a local government agency that manages publicly funded services for mental health needs in the 22 county catchment area. This is the local political subdivision of the state of North Carolina originally known as an area authority and now referred to as a local management entity/managed care organization. Mr. Burleson also explained the Medicaid transformation. Currently there are 3,428 Medicaid eligible residents in Avery County. There are 3,130 estimated Medicaid members moving to Standard Plans in
July and 298 members staying with Vaya after the Standard Plan launch. Mr. Burleson discussed the Vaya Health and Cardinal Innovations Consolidation.

Dennis Aldridge stated that a couple of years ago when transformation was first announced we went through all of the initial explanations and then this went to sleep for 9 months then showed back up with no warning. The same thing has happened with the consolidation. It just happened. At times we feel that we are at the end of the communication loop and everything happens to us as opposed to happening with us. I wish we could have more information and input on the front end of this. Mr. Burleson stated that he was trying to continue to go around and give information to everyone but Covid had stopped things earlier.

Chair Hicks thanked Mr. Burleson for his presentation.

**County Manager Updates – Phillip Barrier, Jr.**
Mr. Barrier stated that there was a Solid Waste report in the informational items for the Board’s information. A trail grant has been submitted with the help of the High Country Council of Governments. A grant with Dogwood Trust on behalf of Freedom Life is being submitted.

The testing site for COVID will be moved to the swimming pool building. Testing is Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. As of Friday there were 90 positive cases in Avery County,

**Finance Officer Report – Caleb Hogan**

**Budget Amendment**
The EMS department is asking that the money that was set aside in available for Appropriations be moved so they can proceed with the purchase of a new ambulance.

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to adopt a Budget Amendment in the amount of $192,000 with a debit of $192,000 to Capital Outlay-Vehicles (105300.7400) and a credit of $192,000 to Available for Appropriations (107000.6000) Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

**Budget Amendment**
The Emergency Management department is asking that the money being set aside in available for Appropriations be moved so they can proceed with the purchase of a new vehicle for the assistant emergency management director.

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Dennis Aldridge to adopt a Budget Amendment in the amount of $55,000 with a debit of $55,000 to Capital Outlay-Automobile (105250.7420) and a credit of $55,000 to Available for Appropriations (107000.6000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).
The Avery County Buildings and Grounds department needs a budget amendment for the purchase of the Cannon Hospital Property at 358 Beech Street.

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Tim Phillips to adopt a Budget Amendment in the amount of $227,566.00 with a debit of $227,566.00 to Capital—Cannon Hospital Property (105000.7430) and a credit of $227,566.00 to Available for Appropriations (107000.6000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

**Budget Amendment**
The Department of Emergency Management has received money from FEMA for various expenses related to pandemic response

**Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to adopt a Budget Amendment in the amount of $19,093.77 with a debit of $19,093.77 to FEMA (105250.3304) and a credit of $19,093.77 to Emergency Management (103812.0000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

**Budget Amendment**
Budget Amendment to recognize the settlement agreement for the Department of EMS.

**Motion by Blake Vance and second by Tim Phillips to adopt the Budget Amendment in the amount of $50,775.13 with a debit of $50,190.13 to Salaries-EMT’s (105300.0220) and a debit of $585.00 to FICA—Administration (105300.0500) and a credit of $50,775.13 to Fund Balance—Appropriated (103990.0000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

**Budget Amendment**
The E911 Department has received permission to pay for new addressing software out of E911 funds. These funds will come out of the E911 fund balance.

**Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to adopt the Budget Amendment in the amount of $12,495.00 with a debit of $12,495.00 to Capital-Equipment (226600.7430) and a credit of $12,495.00 to Emergency Tel. System Fund Balance—Appropriated (223990.0000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

**County Attorney Report – Michelle Poore**
Ms. Poore stated that the Emergency Management ordinance needed to be updated. There had been some statute numbers that have changed since the last ordinance and the expiration of the state of emergency is now aligned with how the state of emergency is called.

WHEREAS, Avery County is at risk of threats to public health, safety, and welfare, injury and loss of life, damage to real and personal property, and economic harm resulting from natural and manmade disasters; and
WHEREAS, the Avery County Board of Commissioners determined that it is in the best interest of health, safety, and welfare of the citizens, residents, and visitors to Avery County to be in a state of readiness to respond to such disasters, and has devoted significant resources toward the preparation for, response to, and recovery from such disasters; and

WHEREAS, to this end, the Avery County Board of Commissioners further determines that in order to maximize the County’s readiness for and its response to such disasters, it is necessary to revise and update the Avery County State of Emergency Ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, pursuant to its authority under Chapter 153A, Chapter 166A and Chapter 36A of Chapter 14 of the North Carolina General Statutes, the Avery County Board of Commissioners adopts the attached Avery County Emergency Management Ordinance to amend and replace the current Emergency Management Ordinance.

Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Blake Vance to adopt the ordinance and the Resolution. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Approval of Minutes
Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to approve the May 13, 2021 Budget Workshop and the July 12, 2021 Special Meeting. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Agenda Consent Items
Adopted by Consensus of the Board.

Upcoming Meetings
The next Regular Meeting will be Monday, September 20, 2021 at 3:30 p.m. A Public Hearing will be held regarding an Avery Transportation grant.

Adjourn
Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Tim Phillips to adjourn this meeting at 4:53 p.m. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Martha Hicks, Chair
Avery County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST: __________________________
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk