

**MITCHELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**MINUTES**

**REGULAR SESSION**

**AUGUST 6, 2007**

**NORTH CAROLINA**

**MITCHELL COUNTY**

The Mitchell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on August 6, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioner's Conference Room, Administration Building, Bakersville, NC. Those present for the meeting were Phil Byrd, Chairman; Lisa Sparks, Vice-Chairman; Mike Hensley, Member; Patrick Phillips, Member; Jim Saylor, Member; Phil Castro, Interim County Manager and Kathy Young, Clerk to the Board. Also present were Hal Harrison, County Attorney; Mavis Parsley, Finance Officer; and Donny Wisor, Reporter with the Mitchell News-Journal.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Byrd called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. **INVOCATION** - County Manager Vines gave the invocation.
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Commissioner Sparks led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. **ADDITIONS OR CHANGED TO THE AGENDA** – Commissioner Saylor moved to change Public Comments to come after Item 7. D. Commissioner Hensley seconded the motion and it carried 4 to 1.
5. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
6. **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS** – Chairman Byrd explained that speakers would be allowed 3 minutes.
7. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**
  - A. **Order of Collection** – Commissioner Hensley moved to approve the Order of Collection. Commissioner Saylor seconded the motion and it carried unanimously
  - B. **Tax Program Update** – Robert Haskins gave the Board an update on the MVP Tax Program and Govern Max. Robert began by sharing with the Board what part of his services were to the county as interim contractor Assessor. He shared he was looking at ways to stream-line the office and get the county ready for revaluation which would be taking place January 1, 2009. He stated he wanted professional services to be provided, he stated there was good new technology and some very old technology, sharing also he wanted to update the old so that it will be current and much more productive to the office, providing much more services to the property owners. He stated what was being proposed was this: Currently the county has a very top of the line program from Manatron that is used to value land and property in the county. When the county appraiser or assessor goes out to look at the property and put a value on that property all of that is figured with the ProVal System. He stated that what happens after that is the new technologies, after an abstract is developed, a value notice can be sent to the property owner or for the tax collector to collect his tax bill to send out his tax notice, the assessors office then has to go back in and re-enter all the information by hand into an old listing and the billing system that is written in DOS. This is very time consuming. They have already entered the information

one time in the ProVal System so they're repeating themselves again. He stated that what could happen is errors, typing errors, number errors, so it's frustrating to the property owner when they get a notice that is wrong and they have to come into the office and it has to be fixed in the system. The problem that comes up is the finance officer wants information from the Tax Collector then she will have to go back to the DOS Program and run reports, she can't automatically go in and gather the information to her program, which was also created by Manatron. He then stated his proposal is to purchase professional services to upgrade the system where it will flow freely from one department to the other. This will benefit us, as employees will not have to re-enter the information again, because with over 18,000 parcels there will definitely be some errors due to time constraints and it will be a lot smoother. He stated another thing that would go with the proposal is allowing attorneys, banks, anyone who contacts the Assessor's Office for information on property cards for the information to be put on the internet so that one can go to the internet for the information. It will allow people to go online if an attorney is doing a closing cost to see what taxes are due and makes Brian Garland's job a lot easier due to answering so many questions regarding what taxes are due. He stated it gives the opportunity for people who have purchased property that don't live in Mitchell County to go online and pay their taxes. What this also does, if that day comes, is if the county wants to, it puts the mapping system online. this system would be already setup; all that would have to be done is to purchase a piece of very inexpensive software and then tax maps can be easily attached to obtained online. He shared that in talking with the staff that it would probably save at least two hours a day on average in staff time by not having to answer the phone and faxing property cards to people because they will be able to access them online. He shared again they could save 2 hours a day and easily 1 hour a day of work-time which would allow the employees to do other things. He requested this be a Professional Service Contract and that the Board would authorize the County manager to execute a contract and then he could bring it back to negotiate it; and again he asked that the Board give him the authority to do that. The costs would be \$101,000 dollars, that could be paid without any interest, and spread out over 2 years and the County Manager and Finance Officer would have to pay for it. He then stated after that there would be an annual fee of \$20,000 dollars in containment program fees and service fees for the internet, but what's good about it is with most small counties (based on his experience in North Carolina) if you don't have the money for this you can go into the general fund, but that doesn't have to be done. What is normally done with the revaluation is there are sufficient funds in the revaluation funds and this is considered part of the revaluation. It has to do with publicity so these funds can be used and extended for this purpose so as not to take it out of the general fund, but designated funds. Robert stated he would be happy to take any questions and hoped the Board would give a favorable vote for this.

Chairman Byrd then asked Robert about the licensing fee.

Robert answered by stating actually it would be \$10,000 dollars for the management on tax and the other \$10,000 would be fees to operate the internet. He stated the \$10,000 fee for the internet is reasonable for what other vendors charge in North Carolina and the licensing fee for the management on tax (since it's a special piece of software and there are only a 100 counties in North Carolina and it's built directed for North Carolina) that is a reasonable fee and we also pay a fee for the ProVal annually.

Chairman Byrd asked how much the county was paying for ProVal right now.

Robert replied he thought it was around \$6,000.

Chairman Byrd then asked if this included the internet posting and putting everything online.

Robert stated it was to put everything online and how that works is for security purposes there is a server that Manatron does here and it goes in whether

everyday or once a week, goes in and pulls up wanted data from the servers that service the tax office. It then sends that to a server farm, which is in Florida, information is transferred to them and they host a server farm that is open 24 hours a day that has a backup facility. So if you logged on to the internet that is actually where the data comes from.

Chairman Byrd asked if the backup would be the same location with the new system. Robert stated it would be a different location.

Chairman Byrd shared that he remembered when the Register of Deeds was being backed up from somewhere on the coast, that a Hurricane came through and put them out of commission for a while as far as information.

Robert stated this would be a separate location, not the same place.

Commissioner Sparks commented that when ProVal was originally put in, in 2000, the contract read (and she stated she remembered it quit well) that the ProVal system would roll over to the DOS billing system. She then asked Kathy if it had been two years, and Kathy agreed. She then stated when it was originally discussed regarding the system that they were looking at \$60,000 dollars, approximately, and now we're up to \$110,000 dollars. She stated she would like to see the tax office convenient for everybody, but that amount of expense she just couldn't see. The \$60,000 dollars for the billing system would be great, but if it is to be done, it needs to be done in steps. She stated there was funding through the E-911 that we would be able to pay for the GIS system, which will be needed anyway to update to the new 911. Commissioner Sparks also stated her personal opinion was to go back to the drawing board on this issue and she then asked Robert, why barcode scanners would be needed at a cost of \$20,000 dollars.

Robert Haskins added that barcode scanners were not needed.

Commissioner Sparks then stated that she felt someone needed to look back at the contract and the fact that they were suppose to rollover to the DOS system which didn't happen, and see what they would want to do.

Commissioner Hensley stated that the way he understood it was that the money was already there and that it wouldn't affect the taxpayer. He stated in his terms that he felt it was like a railroad track and that we were missing part of the track. He stated by putting in the new system it would make things easier by taking human error out as we have had quit a few human errors in the 2000 ReVal. He stated he would love to see this one go as smooth as possible without a lot of people getting upset, but he was afraid of how people would react over this and that if we do replace the system it will not be something that will be replaced over the next eight years; this is because of the money that will have to be set aside for the next ReVal. He stated that the County Manager could negotiate with those involved to come back and state exactly what the contract would be and how much money would be spent right then; therefore we will not invest any money at this time and keep it as low as possible.

Robert Haskins then asked Mr. Hensley if he would authorize the County Manager to do so.

Commissioner Hensley relayed that was what he was saying and this was just for the authorization.

Commissioner Phillips inquired about the \$20,000 dollars and what it was for.

Robert stated as before that \$10,000 was the internet hosting fee that will pay for the internet access. He stated the other \$10,000 is a licensing fee to support the government software systems and this is because their systems are small with few updates and upgrades that have to be done in their service to us.

Commissioner Sparks stated they were charging right at \$6,000 dollars for support and the appraisal system now and they wanted to charge \$10,000 more for the billing system.

Robert stated that was for billing and for maintaining the system.

Commissioner Sparks then stated this would have to be renegotiated and that she was sorry.

Commissioner Saylor then asked Robert if he could see this system saving us over the long haul of 10 years.

Robert stated that he did think the system would save money over the long haul unless there is some way the ProVal system can be rolled over to the DOS system. He stated it would save money just from the keying in and would overall make Brian Garland much more efficient, the listing more efficient and benefit the county. He stated he could try and put a dollar amount on it if needed.

Commissioner Saylor stated he would like to know that and also if it was ever decided to do an in-house ReVal on the next one coming up and what affect would it have.

Robert Haskins stated that was a whole other animal and that just would make it go smoother if the conversion couldn't be worked out without having to re-enter all the data.

Commissioner Sparks then stated that once it is entered in to the appraisal system it will automatically rollover into billing in the ProVal system and right now we don't have that system, we have DOS. She stated when this was originally done the county did not have the money to buy the billing portion of the ProVal system which is state-of-the-art, a wonderful system, easy to use and easy to understand. She stated that now everything that's put into ProVal has to be entered also into billing and if we had the other part of the system then we would be able to do the rollover and there wouldn't be need for as many employees in the tax office. She stated that in her opinion we would save money, and another problem with this is that originally \$60,000 dollars is what was talked about, stating she believes they really need to go back to the drawing board on this issue since they had originally stated they could roll the ProVal system over into the DOS system without a problem; it was tried two years in a row and they finally pulled it off after about three weeks. She continued stating it was complicated and there was nothing easy about it and that it boiled down to everyone having to put the same information in twice and so it's a mess in there. She stated again, it needs to be renegotiated because they had made this county a promise; it's in the contract and they can't do it so now we really are going to have to buy the other system or continue to enter everything in twice.

Chairman Byrd replied to Commissioner Sparks by telling her he was in support of the new system, but concerned about the price part.

Commissioner Sparks asked if the price of \$10,000 for support and now we are already paying \$6,000 for the appraisal through the ProVal system and they want \$10,000 dollars more a year for support on Kathy responded, exactly, because in DOS program they have more than what they have in the windows based program and somebody will have to change. Commissioner Sparks responded by stating they had guaranteed to us that this program would work.

Chairman Byrd then asked if a motion could be made in regards to what was being asked for and to authorize the County Manager to work with Robert Haskins in negotiating with ProVal, check on prices and check to see if they did complete their end of the contract. He added that then he could report to the Board, possibly have another meeting and then come back with a consensus

since time is of the essence in this matter. He then asked the Board if this would be good with them.

Commissioner Saylor moved to approve the purchase of MVP and Govern Max. Commissioner Sparks seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

- C. **Bid on Parcel 0880-16-94-7127** – Commissioner Sparks moved to advertise all the foreclosure properties for bid. Commissioner Hensley seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.
- D. **Discussion of Mental Health money** - No action was taken.
- E. **Development and Adoption of a Moratorium on High Impact Development in Mitchell County** – Commissioner Hensley presented the Board with a copy of an Ordinance for a Moratorium on High Impact Development in Mitchell County. Commissioner Saylor moved to adopt the Moratorium on High Impact Development. Commissioner Hensley seconded the motion. The motion failed by a vote of 2 to 3 three. Commissioner Sparks, Commissioner Byrd and Commissioner Phillips opposed the motion.

8. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** -

**Robert Hobson** - asked Commissioner Hensley if he had received a lot of phones calls regarding the development of the Communities of Penland.

Commissioner Hensley stated he had more phone calls on that issue than any other and that people would even stop by his shop to comment.

Mr. Hopson then asked Commissioner Hensley to let the people of the community vote on the matter and if they voted for it, then so be it, but if not then it should be stopped. He then turned to Commissioner Byrd and asked him his thoughts the matter.

**Don Baucom** - began by addressing the Board and others present with a warm welcome to Mr. Charles Vines as the newly appointed county manager. He stated that he didn't believe he had been publicly welcomed as the new County Manager in a public meeting, public session or in front of the Board of County Commissioners. He said he had ask for a moratorium of any kind of development that might go on in this county and what he had stated at that point and time awakened thoughts in others minds. He stated as a result of that fact, he thought it was high time they began looking at this in a positive manner and not have such a negative attitude. He again, relayed that he had never seen such a negative attitude and stated he wanted to therefore volunteer to work with the county attorney and the county manager to help adopt the moratorium to make sure all the legal aspects of it are met as far as the county attorney is concerned. He asked to allow this to happen and to slow this roller coaster down that's moving here in Mitchell County and stated that if thoughts were the Communities of Penland were dead, then that should be forgotten because there is a former agent of that outfit that is still out selling lots right and left in the Communities of Penland, Deer Park Lake and in other areas; and they are violating the laws and rights of the people in those areas. He stated unless we wake up and pass the moratorium to slow the freight train down, it will run on to mars and he sees no reason for the Board to sit there and state that you can't violate peoples' rights as they are being run over every day in this county. He told the Board they were making peoples' lives miserable and allowing people to run over this county with no ordinances to regulate it. He stated the Board had let an asphalt plant get away with it and not one Board member knew about it. He stated it was brought to the county secretary and she signed the letter that was required by law and not one of the Board members knew about it at the last meeting. He stated it's time we woke up to the fact that we need some kind of control on the growth of things within the county. He shared it was a golden opportunity to let the county manager that is now in place begin work on this along with the county attorney; to look at the issue objectively and put something

in the paper to slow things down until Dr. Cooper has time to get information to the Board. He stated until Dr. Cooper gets here with the information needed other things could happen. He posed these questions: Are they going to burn the rest of Spruce Pine down? Are they going to burn Penland down? What else is going to happen before some kind of action is taken by the Board to regulate the groups coming in.

**Dr. Carroll** - stated he was certainly glad that Mr. Vines had come to help out and that he appreciates his efforts in the past and down the road. He stated one of the things he had heard was that the EPA would save us and that he felt most people would recognize that as being overly optimistic. He stated some of the things the permits called for are glutens like benzene and arsenic which are highly toxic and will exist in the ground for a long time and accumulate and those permit levels are very close to the top levels which are allowed by the EPA and the state. He stated those permit levels only actually include what comes from and is actually known as the actual processing of the aggregate as well as the silos that are going to store the aggregate. He proceeded by adding that lots and lots of studies have been done on what happens with asphalt plants, which is no grave mystery. He shared that what was known as the permit calls for, was something like: if a plant makes 225 tons of asphalt or tons of meticulous per year, (adding he had a letter regarding a plant in Virginia that was rated for 200,000 tons per year and they estimated that the actual fuji to the missions, that being submissions that are not even covered by a permit, just for the particulates is 38 tons a year) so to say that the EPA is going to protect us, they are going to do what the law calls for, but it's ridiculous to think that industry will protect us from industry; it just doesn't happen. He added there are some responsible industries, but the law protects us from industries, the people protects us and we certainly hope that the government protects us from industries, but that it remains to be seen. He stated he thought this was an opportunity that we should take advantage of and then he read that one of the principles of good government is to put safety first and even if an asphalt plant meets all state and federal air pollution standards, people living near by are still exposed to cancer causing substances that cause long term damage. He added standards are based on principle of acceptable risks and assumed that each day will enforce the standards that the plant will operate perfectly and the operator can be trusted perfectly to operate on an honor system to all laws and regulations that apply to their facility without any government oversight. He stated that in the majority of cases its unknown and theoretically reflected by computer models and used by plant owners to accurately reflect errors in the plants daily operation. In general, the plants are not inspected regularly if at all, and all of this is based on modeling. He then stated findings would show to be strictly sparse, so why not put safety first and shut down our overhaul of the current system that fails to protect communities from the daily health hazards of asphalt plant pollution. Sr. Carroll stated that was the reason why he was asking the Board to put the needs of the people first and protect us from an industry that does not protect us and concluded with "Thank you".

**Bill Wygand** – stated that Mr. Saylor had mentioned that he thought the surrounding county folks and some other counties (also stating he had done some looking around himself) like Henderson County, was most interesting and with the most demanding development controller emphasis of any county in Western North Carolina, maybe not all North Carolina, but Western North Carolina. He stated Henderson County is one county where developers are resisting eliminating these controls as they provide protection for buyers who desire to make properties more desirable. He stated that Jackson County had recently experienced dam failure. He shared that a golf course was being constructed as part of a new high-end residential development where environmental damage was significant creating serious amounts of damage and flooding. He stated that less than two months ago there was a significant fish kill in Madison County immediately known to be from more construction; and although not proven, it is believed to be related to development activities. He stated that obviously one could tell by his accent that he was not from these parts

and that people who have similar accents to his, say things about him and what it's like being around people in Mitchell County and frankly Mitchell County is gaining the reputation of being a bunch of backward hillbillies waiting to be taken advantage of and that's pitiful. He stated that's not a fact, but the fact is Mitchell County is not a bunch of backward hillbillies and it's not the fault of anyone in the room but it's wrong government and were doing it to ourselves. Avery County has a hot mix asphalt plant and data shows that the value of property adjacent to the plant has decreased by as much as 57% and that residents in the vicinity have experienced a variety of symptoms that have been associated with asphalt plant additions. He added that contrary to Commissioner Sparks' convictions there is irrefutable evidence that supports actual omissions from polluting industries with DNR permits that exceed the permitted limits due to operator error, equipment failure or operating beyond a designed capacity of pollution control systems and stated he personally knew this as fact having been in the chemical industry in Virginia and North Carolina. North Carolina Departmental Natural Resources is not adequately staffed to enforce pollution and environmental control laws at every development sight in Western North Carolina and staffers have acknowledge personally to him that they are heavily dependent upon citizens and local governments to bring forth problems that need DNR attention. It took a couple of years for DNR and the army core of engineers to catch up with all the flagellant violations by just one developer here in our county and the Communities of Penland. He then stated that Mitchell County had been slow to protect it's people by the liberty desecration of others and after the fact in the case of inorganic compounds, "locking the barn door and the horse is gone". As far as the Cooper contract is concerned, he stated he hasn't run into anyone yet (adding he doesn't know everybody in the county obviously) that thinks it's good to wait seven to eight months before controls are to put in place on the things that we know are causing damage.

**Dr. North** – stated it would be tuff to follow up as a guy who was not from around here, but added he appreciated the Board allowing him to speak. He stated he was coming before the board today primarily as a parent and that his son Eli was two-year-old. They have just moved back to Mitchell County to be close to his in-laws and this great community. He stated their home was three-quarters of a mile from the proposed sight of the asphalt plant. He stated he had great concerns with Eli's growing up in that environment and living there for potentially eighteen years; growing up exposed to those conditions. He stated also he was a homeowner and the statistics sighted by the previous gentlemen and the value of his home decreasing, is concerning. He stated they had bought an older home in the community and had already put about 10% of what they paid for the house back into it already and they have acquired new property adjacent to it. He stated he appreciated that Commissioner Sparks had stated you couldn't tell anyone what to do on their own land, but he wished the same thought about how you can't tell anybody what will impact their property values would also be understood. He stated he felt he would like to have his property value protected since it is a long-term investment for a lifetime and also important. He stated he had done a little bit of reading and one of the things that really stands out is the rate of asthma across the board is increasing and it's in the papers on a daily basis. In addition to that our kids are at a great risk to second hand smoke and other factors in this county, especially babies. They lack primary care, and it's not because we as doctors are not good enough it's because there's not enough of us, adding another factor to increase asthma, increases the number of visits to an already stressed emergency department and is not a smart move. He stated there are very few studies that look directly at the relationship of asphalt plants and pediatric asthma cases. He then stated however, one published in February of this year demonstrates that for kids living and going to school within one mile of an asphalt plant, have a 25% higher rate of asthma than other children. He stated his preference is that we work as a community so that families will want to come and stay, adding it's very important. He then asked the Board to allow people an opportunity to share their voices, their opinions, as to whether or not there should be this moratorium or not.

## **9. APPOINTMENTS**

**A. Toe River Health District** - Dr. Bressert has resigned from the Toe River Health District Board.

**10. CONSENT AGENDA** – Commissioner Sparks moved to approve the Consent Agenda (a copy of each item is hereby attached and becomes a part of the minutes). Commissioner Saylor seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

- *NC Division of Forest Services Contract*
- *General Fund Certificate of Deposit Renewal*
- *Revaluation Certificate of Deposit Renewal*
- *Agreement for the Provision of Family Caregiver Support Services*
- *Home & Community Care Block Grant for Older Adults Agreement for the Provision of County-Based Aging Services*
- *Home & Community Care Block Grant for Older Adults Budget*
- *Contract for Professional Services Template*
- *One North Carolina Fund Local Government Development Form*
- *Lease Agreement with Heaven Bound Church*
- *Memorandum of Agreement with NC A&T State University*

**11. COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT** – County Manager Vines thanked the audience for the privilege to work in Mitchell County and stated he would continue to do everything he possibly could to make things as good as possible in the county. He also added the situation in Spruce Pine was currently in the hands of the ATF and the SBI State of North Carolina investigating the fires that happened over the weekend. He stated Spruce was doing well, but that the main concern was about the businesses that were closed, but noted that today at noon they did open the businesses back up on Upper Street. He stated that power had been restored and that Piedmont Natural Gas had their lights back on but that the operation except for the units that are affected at this time. He stated that Lower Street would probably remain closed till the later part of the week depending on the investigation that is being conducted. He shared it was a real tedious situation and it could be a criminal investigation until they know anything, dotting all the I's and crossing all the T's to make sure nothing is compromised in anyway during their investigation. He stated we should work with them that the Town Board of Spruce Pine would be meeting with the closed businesses on Lower Street tomorrow morning and each day after that to be current on what's going on so they can aware of when they can get back to their facilities. He also stated there's a lot of concern regarding the economic impact on Spruce Pine, being that the Mineral & Gem Festival is in this weekend, it will be a grave impact on them. He also stated the last word he had heard from the Town Board of Spruce Pine was that they would overcome the situation and that thoughts and prayers were with them for all that they do and the people working out there for them; a lot to be going through at the present time.

**A. Medicaid Relief** - He stated there were legislative bulletins in front of each member for them to look at and one of them Governor Mike Easley signed for the county budget of 2007. He stated there had been a motion for the account to end and to participate in the Medicaid program which will distributed over a 3 to 4-year period of time, letting Board members know we are still gaining information and everything added for the process to go through. He stated there were some options to be had and asked the Board to look on next page for the town. He shared there are opportunities to renovate and restore existing infrastructures with authority to give counties to levy a four percent land transfer tax or four percent increase in sales tax to alleviate until this is in full effect. The reason this was brought up is because it requires a voter referendum to approve it and that why the issue was brought up at this time and see if the Board wanted to discuss the issue in any way.

Chairman Byrd asked what would happen if neither one of the two was put to a vote does Medicaid relief goes away so that we take care of our-selves.

County Manager Vines stated that it would not and it shouldn't affect that at all. He stated the county DSS will still continue to do everything they can on a daily basis it would just be funded differently and they will doing a half of a percent sales tax out of all of the counties for the next 3 years. He stated the county would be impacted either way.

Chairman Byrd asked whether or not paragraph 4 had any ties to Medicare Relief.

County Manager Vines stated there was not. He stated it gave the Board an opportunity to look at the additional revenues as this was the first time something like this had happened in a long time.

Commissioner Hensley then remarked that nothing could be done about this anyway without a public referendum.

County Manager Vines stated that was correct, but the reason he had brought it up was due to the fact that if a decision was not made this month it would not make the November Referendum. He stated decisions have to be made whether on the Referendum or not.

Commissioner Byrd stated they would discuss it at a later date and asked Kathy to call the board as to when they could get together to set a date. He then asked everyone if that sounded good to them.

Commissioner Saylor made one comment by stating that if it was decided that it be put on a referendum that he would like for the Board to make a special effort to get the information out to the people till they understand the two options, most likely if they don't understand the referendum then it will be voted down. He stated from what he knew about it, that if it's voted down it will hurt us and it should be put in the news media so the public can understand and know what they are voting on. He asked County Manager Vines if he understood this right.

County Manager Vines stated he was right and that we needed to get all the information we possible could out to the public.

Commissioner Sparks then relayed that she understood it would have to be voted on at the next election.

**B. High County Council of Governments Meeting & Banquet** – County Manger Vines shared he wanted the Board to be aware of this meeting and that if any of them wanted to attend to let him know so he could make the arrangements.

**12. BOARD COMMENTS** - Commissioner Mike Hensley stated that it was Charles Vine's first meeting with the Board and that there had been a lot of good candidates for the job. He stated the Board felt he was the best for the job and welcomed him. He stated one of the reasons they had elected Mr. Vines was because people know him and he has been the Mayor of Bakersville for 16 years. He stated he hoped he didn't get many more "break-in moments" like he had the past weekend. He stated one thing he would like for everyone to do as a public body is that any fire found in this county be it, Bakersville, Spruce Pine, Buladean, Fork Mountain, wherever, Parkway, and he stated there were fifteen fire departments, five counties are involved which includes Madison, Yancey, Mitchell, Avery and McDowell and shows what people in this county can do when their in trouble; they stick together. He stated he wanted to see the firemen presented with something each year by the residents or by the Firemen's' Association for the wonderful job they had done adding that they had saved Spruce Pine. He stated the fire was very intentional and they (those responsible) were determined to burn Spruce Pine down and the same could happen to Bakersville. He stated the firemen risked their lives to save the property (Spruce Pine) and they will do the

same for anyone if needed as they are gallant men and deserve all the praise they could have and so we should give it to them.

Commissioner Saylor welcomed Charles Vines to the Board and added that one thing Commissioner Hensley had not mentioned was that Mr. Vines was qualified. He also stated he had kept him informed personally of everything that was going on during the tragedy of Spruce Pine and thanked him for that. He stated the county Board needed to contact the local department that had assisted that were involved by sending out our gratitude to them for the job that they have done. He stated he had talked with the Assistant Chief of Spruce Pine Fire Department on this day and they couldn't have done it without the aide from other departments, adding that Mitchell County departments had done an excellent job, adding again without the aide of the other departments coming in there would have been a lot more loss than what there was. He then stated that we needed to recognize the other departments also.

Commissioner Patrick Phillips stated that he welcomed Charles to the Board and added his hopes were that it would make Mitchell County stronger. He stated when Bakersville lost a high school it seemed it lost a little bit of its life. He relayed that Charles had done a lot, because every building full with a lot of life and he felt he would do the same for Mitchell County. He added to what Commissioner Saylor had previously stated; what would this county be without qualified fireman? He stated we owed them a great debt because the situation could have been a lot worse. He then added again that he welcomed Charles.

Commissioner Sparks welcomed Charles as well and had done so many times. She shared that she felt he was doing a good job and that he had done so over the weekend and it was appreciated. She stated as far as the fireman in regards to the job they had done in Spruce Pine that she had mentioned to Charles on Sunday to be sure that they were sent a letter of gratitude for the job they had done in Mitchell County.

Commissioner Hensley added there was another person, Kathy Young, who should be thanked.

County Manager Vines added that Mrs. Mavis Parsley should be thanked also for her involvement. He stated both were at all the meetings and met with the important people over the issue. He added he gave his hand to help people and walked the streets of Spruce Pine talking with People. He stated the Fire Departments had done a terrific job, first of all, there was no loss of lives and in dealing with fifteen different fire departments from five counties and being able to do what they did on lower street to save the buildings in between. There were three locations of the fire, one of which was Mayland Armature; a minor fire, the Depot which was a minor fire, but the main fire in town was substantial. He added the Wylie building was saved, Hair Craft and Tree House Reality and also stated there were either 12 or 14 businesses in the Wylie Building. He stated they had saved 17 to 18 businesses with the work they had done which was an outstanding job.

Chairman Byrd added when all was done that we needed to make sure that no departments were left out.

County Manager Vines agreed and stated he had already requested that information.

Chairman Byrd relayed that the 911 Centers, Emergency Management, and Sheriff's Department also needed to be included.

County Manager Vines added there had been law enforcement probation from other counties that had provided security.

Chairman Byrd added that Yancey County Sheriff's Department and Madison County Law Enforcement should be included.

County Manager Vines relayed that he would make sure he had all that information.

- 13. ADJOURNMENT** – Commissioner Sparks moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Hensley seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

MITCHELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Phil Byrd, Chairman

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Lisa Sparks, Vice-Chairman

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Mike Hensley, Member

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Patrick Phillips, Member

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Jim Saylor, Member

ATTEST:

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Kathy Young, Clerk to the Board