

**MITCHELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**MINUTES**

**REGULAR SESSION**

**SEPTEMBER 2, 2014**

**NORTH CAROLINA**

**MITCHELL COUNTY**

The Mitchell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on September 2, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioner's Conference Room, Administration Building, Bakersville, NC. Those present for the meeting were: Bill Slagle, Chairman; Joe Street, Vice-Chairman; Ken Hollifield, Member; Keith Holtsclaw, Member; Rickey McKinney, Member; Charles Vines, County Manager and Kathy Young, Clerk to the Board. Also present were: Lloyd Hise, County Attorney and Andy Mendhenk, Reporter with the Mitchell-News Journal.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Commissioner Slagle called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. **INVOCATION** – Commissioner Hollifield gave the invocation.
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – County Manager Vines led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. **ETHICS AWARENESS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST REMINDER:**  
*In accordance with the State Government Ethics Act, it is the duty of every Board member to avoid both conflicts of interest and appearance of conflict. Does any board member have any known conflicts of interest or appearances of conflict with respect to any matters coming before the Board? If so, please identify the conflict or appearance of conflict and refrain from any undue participation in the particular matter involved.*
5. **ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA** – Commissioner Street moved to add a Closed Session in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 143-318-11(5) which reads as follows: To establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating (i) the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease; or (ii) the amount of compensation and other material terms of an employment contract or proposed employment contract. Commissioner Hollifield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.
6. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Commissioner Hollifield moved to adopt the agenda Commissioner Street seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

7. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Commissioner Holtsclaw moved to approve the Minutes for August 11, 2014. Commissioner Hollifield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.
8. **PUBLIC COMMENTS/BOARD COMMENTS** – Chairman Slagle recognized Charles and Norma Duncan for being voted the Outstanding Senior Tar Heel Legislature Members for 2014. The following is the Press Release:

**Outstanding Senior Tar Heel Legislature Members 2014** – Norma and Charles Duncan are Mitchell County natives. They graduated from high school in 1955 and married in 1957. They have two married children and three grandchildren.

Norma and Charles are active in their church, having taught youth Sunday school classes for thirty-three years, served as deaconess and deacon and worked with the Brotherhood and WMU. They also support Mitchell sports and the youth that participate.

Charles, who currently serves as chairperson of the regional STHL, attended Lees McRae College, served in the Army, held jobs in local business and was in the “car business” for thirty years. Charles was awarded a lifetime membership in the Optimist Club for his work with Mitchell County youth and has served on the Parks and Recreation Committee that facilitated the development of the county’s first park and pool.

Norma has worked as a nurse in many capacities including: school nurse, operating room nurse and a long term care nurse. She received a Bachelor of Science in Allied Health from Mars Hill College and was licensed as a family nurse practitioner through UNC-Chapel Hill. She holds certifications from Duke University and the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta and worked for North Carolina’s Division of Facilities Services – Medical Review and served as a nurse consultant with the Licensure Division. She also belongs to a number of nursing associations and societies.

When Norma retired in 2008 she became active in the Mitchell County Health Partnership and returned to school to become certified as a congregational nurse. Through her work at the Bakersville Baptist Church, she began to see the needs of older adults in the community. Charles soon began going along on home visits and together they developed a passion of making things better for older citizens and recognized the important roles of the senior center, respite care and nursing homes.

In 2012, Norma and Charles became involved with the Regional Senior Tar Heel Legislature, where they advocate for maintain the Home and Community Care Block Grant because they strongly support the services such as, congregate meals, home delivered meals and In-Home Aides, funded by this program. They are also active in the statewide STHL, serving on the Health Care Committee, where Norma serves as secretary of the Advocacy Committee.

In addition to their work with the STHL, Norma and Charles are also certified Masters of Balance Coaches, which is an evidence based health initiative that builds strength and balance to prevent falls among older adults. They are also active with the Bakersville Baptist Church food bank.

## 9. REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS

- A. Legislative Update – Representative Dobson – Representative Dobson thanked the Board for allowing him to attend the meeting. He stated that from the time he received his appointment, he appreciated the board's friendships.

Representative Dobson stated that when the short session started he had three main goals. He said he wanted to make sure that the legislature at least made an attempt to get a start on addressing the coal ash issue. There has never been any coal ash legislation in any state, so the legislature was starting from scratch. His next goal was to protect education for Mitchell County and rural western North Carolina. Public Education is working here. There are some issues in other parts of the state. But as far as rural western North Carolina, he would put his three superintendents, principals, and teachers up against anybody in the state. He stated he felt we had some of the best. The third goal was Senate Bill 370 which is the School Prayer bill.

Representative Dobson stated that they passed coal ash legislation that requires all coal ash ponds be closed through recycling, removal or relocation to special sealed landfills. He said this was an important piece of legislation that was passed and he was proud to support it.

Representative Dobson stated he felt it was important to keep teacher assistants in tack during the budget process, particularly in the rural poor areas. He said that teacher assistants play a vital role in our education system. He explained they were able to keep them in tack for the most part. Representative Dobson stated they were able to provide all of our hard working teachers a raise. There was a lot of different opinions on how to implement the raise, but at the end of the day the bottom line is that every teacher was making more after the budget was passed than before. He said that this met his criteria and was proud to support it. Representative Dobson said they were able to protect education and pass coal ash legislation in the budget and he was proud of that.

Representative Dobson said that Senate Bill 370 had to do with education, but it was a separate bill. A little girl in McDowell County wanted to read a poem that referenced God. He said that McDowell had a superintendent that was not from our area and he caused a little stir. This caused it to reverberate all over western North Carolina. It was important to pass Senate Bill 370. This bill clarified what teacher could do with regard to religious freedom in school and clarified what students could do in regard to religious freedom in school. The law was not rewritten nor the constitution. This was a clarification bill. It passed the Senate last in 2013 by a vote of forty-eight to one. The bill passed the house with a vote of one hundred and six to nine. Representative Dobson stated that was one of the proudest moments he had during this legislative session. He said that he felt that this was important to our district.

Representative Dobson stated some other key points of the budget are: the step pay plan for the Highway Patrol; and all state employees did receive a raise and most receive forty hours of bonus time as well.

Representative Dobson stated that on Senate Bill 370 Senator Hise took the lead on this bill, got it through the Senate very quickly and moved on to the House.

Commissioner Holtsclaw ask Representative Dobson to keep the counties away from any unfunded mandates going forward.

Chairman Slagle informed Representative Dobson that Mitchell County had lost its Low Wealth Funding and the formula currently used needed to be looked at. He stated the Department of Commerce had been really good about working with us and we need to assist them any way we could. Commissioner Slagle stated that the funding formula for DOT had changed and had the 19E project been six months later; it would not have received funding. He stated there was some concern about what this would mean going forward. This project is a high priority for Mitchell and Yancey County.

County Manager Vines stated Representative Dobson would be holding a Town Hall meeting at the Mitchell County Historical Courthouse on September 23, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

- B. **EDC Update - EDC Director Slagle** – Chairman Slagle stated on the Certified Industrial Site, it has partially been cleaned up by Mike Queen. The bids for the access road will go out on October 1, 2014, and it appears there will be some savings on the road. There have been two people who have visited the site. He stated they are working on grants in the amount of \$630,000 to tie the sewer systems together and bring up the water towers to compliance. Chairman Slagle informed the Board that the Long Range Plan the EDC is working on should be finished by Christmas. He stated that the Town of Spruce Pine received a \$20,000 donation from CSX Railroad. Chairman Slagle said that in September he would be presenting to the EDC Board a Work Ready Certificate. This is about a four step process that the major employers will have to follow through to allow an interview for prospective employees.

## 10. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

- A. **Resolution Opposing the Designation of Additional Wilderness Areas within the Nantahala/Pisgah National Forest in Mitchell County** – Commissioner Hollifield moved to adopt the Resolution Opposing the Designation of Additional Wilderness Areas within the Nantahala/Pisgah National Forest in Mitchell County (a copy is hereby attached and becomes a part of the minutes). Commissioner Street seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

## 11. **APPOINTMENTS**

- A. **W.A.M.Y. Community Action Board** – Commissioner Holtsclaw moved to appoint Ted Ollis to the W.A.M. Y. Community Action Board. Commissioner Hollifield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.
- B. **Mitchell County Joint Community Advisory Committee** – Commissioner Street moved to appoint Norma Duncan to the Mitchell County Joint Community Advisory Committee for a one year term. Commissioner Hollifield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

## 12. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. **Property Refunds/Releases/Discoveries for August**
- B. **Vehicle Refunds/Releases/Discoveries for August**
- C. **Releases for 2013 Bills Less than \$5.00**
- D. **Releases for 2014 Bills Less than \$5.00**

Commissioner Holtsclaw moved to approve the Consent Agenda (a copy of the Consent Agenda Items are hereby attached and become a part of the minutes). Commissioner Hollifield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

13. **CLOSED SESSION** – Commissioner Hollifield moved to enter into Closed Session in accordance with N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (5) which reads as the following: To establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating (i) the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease; or (ii) the amount of compensation and other material terms of an employment contract or proposed employment contract. Commissioner Street seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Commissioner Holtsclaw moved to go out of Closed Session. Commissioner Hollifield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Closed Session was held from 6:38 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

Commissioner Street moved not to purchase the Buladean School from the Mitchell County Board of Education. Commissioner Hollifield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

14. **COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT** – County Manager Vines informed the Board that Chairman Slagle had been appointed as the NCACC District Manager for District 14 for two years. He provided the Board with an overview of the Golden Leaf process. County Manager Vines stated that he had been monitoring the situation at DSS since the last meeting. As of today all of their positions are filled in Child Protective Services, however as of Friday they will be one short. They are handling twelve to thirteen cases per worker. County Manger Vines stated that our Chairman has been nominated to serve on the National Association of Counties Program and Services Standing Committee. Because of this appointment he will serve on the Rural Action Caucus, International Economic Development Task Force and the Arts and Culture Commission. He has also been appointed to the NACo Community, Economic and Workforce Development Steering Committee.

15. **BOARD COMMENTS** – Commissioner Street commended Chairman Slagle on the job he was doing for EDC.

Commissioner Holtsclaw ask County Manager Vines about the space allocation plan. County Manager Vines stated he thought he would have it by Friday. Commissioner Holtsclaw said that he thought the Board would get it today. He ask if the CAP billing was caught up now. He stated that program would have to be monitored closely, because it cost the county more money this year than was anticipated.

Discussion was held on the Foster Care Program. Commissioner Hollifield expressed concern about how this program is currently being managed and how long it takes to become a certified foster care parent.

Chairman Slagle reminded the Board that Commissioner Holtsclaw, Commissioner Street, County Manager Vines and he would be attending NC Business & Industry Conference in Washington on September 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. He stated they would be meeting with Representative McHenry, Congressman Meadows, Scott Hamilton and Congressman Phil Roe and Joe McKinney.

16. **ADJOURNMENT** – Commissioner Street moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Hollifield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

**MITCHELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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**Bill Slagle, Chairman**

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**Joe Street, Vice-Chairman**

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**Ken Hollifield, Member**

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**Keith Holtsclaw, Member**

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**Rickey McKinney, Member**

**ATTEST:**

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**Kathy Young, NCCCC Clerk to the Board**

