

Public Service Announcement

In order to maintain the safety of County residents, the Watauga County Board of Commissioners Meeting scheduled for 8:30 A.M. on Tuesday, April 7, 2020, will be conducted electronically. The Board Packet, including the agenda, is available on the County's website at:

http://www.wataugacounty.org/App_Pages/Dept/BOC/boardpacket.aspx

The public may access this meeting by calling: +1 929 205 6099

Once you call, you will be prompted to enter the following:

Meeting ID: 490 877 237

Password: 12345

The County is making every effort to ensure that the public is able to, not only listen to the meeting, but also to participate in the public comments portion. You may submit public comment by email to: public.comments@watgov.org or by mail to:

Clerk to the Board of Commissioners
814 West King Street, Suite 205
Boone, NC 28607

Public comments received by 5:00 P.M. on Monday, April 6, 2020, will be available to view by the time of the meeting (April 7, 2020, at 8:30 A.M.) on the County's website at: http://www.wataugacounty.org/App_Pages/Dept/BOC/boardpacket.aspx

A recording of this meeting will be available by 5:00 P.M. on Tuesday, April 7, 2020, on the County's website at:

http://www.wataugacounty.org/App_Pages/Dept/BOC/boardpacket.aspx

Continue to the next page
to view the Board Packet.

**TENTATIVE AGENDA & MEETING NOTICE
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2020
8:30 A.M.**

**ELECTRONIC MEETING ORIGINATING FROM THE
WATAUGA COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
MANAGER'S CONFERENCE ROOM**

TIME	#	TOPIC	PRESENTER	PAGE
8:30	1	CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER		
	2	APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 17, 2020, Regular Meeting March 17, 2020, Closed Session		1
	3	APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 7, 2020, AGENDA		13
8:35	4	WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ELECTRONIC MEETING POLICY	MR. DERON GEOUQUE	15
8:40	5	CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) COMMUNITY UPDATE	MS. JENNIFER GREENE	19
8:45	6	REQUEST FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (CIP) FUNDS	MS. LY MARZE	21
8:50	7	REQUEST FOR FUNDS TO UPGRADE AND PROFESSIONALIZE THE DOC WATSON MUSEUM AT THE HISTORIC COVE CREEK SCHOOL	MR. DAVID TYNER	23
8:55	8	REQUEST FOR NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION TO PARTNER WITH APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY ON GRANT PROJECT FOR VETERAN FARMERS	MR. JIM HAMILTON	29
9:00	9	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC) ALLOCATION RECOMMENDATION TO HIGH COUNTRY FOOD HUB	MR. JOE FURMAN	31
9:05	10	BID AWARD REQUEST FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE GUY FORD ROAD PADDLE ACCESS	MR. JOE FURMAN	47
9:10	11	MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS	MR. DERON GEOUQUE	
		A. Watauga County Humane Society Request to Apply for Small Business Loan Under the Recently Enacted CARE Act		49
		B. Vehicle Purchase		51
		C. Announcements		55
9:15	12	PUBLIC COMMENT		56
10:15	13	BREAK		56
10:20	14	CLOSED SESSION Attorney/Client Matters – G. S. 143-318.11(a)(3)		56
10:30	15	ADJOURN		

AGENDA ITEM 2:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

March 17, 2020, Regular Meeting

March 17, 2020, Closed Session

DRAFT**MINUTES****WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2020**

The Watauga County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting, as scheduled, on Tuesday, March 17, 2020, at 5:30 P.M. in the Commissioners' Board Room located in the Watauga County Administration Building in Boone, North Carolina.

PRESENT: John Welch, Chairman
 Billy Kennedy, Vice-Chairman
 Larry Turnbow, Commissioner
 Charlie Wallin, Commissioner
 Perry Yates, Commissioner
 Andrea Capua, County Attorney
 Deron Geouque, County Manager
 Anita J. Fogle, Clerk to the Board

Chairman Welch called the meeting to order at 5:32 P.M.

Commissioner Wallin opened with a prayer and Commissioner Turnbow led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Welch congratulated Ms. Kayla Lasure upon recently winning awards for her work as a reporter with the Watauga Democrat.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Welch called for additions and/or corrections to the following minutes:

- February 13 & 14, 2020, Special Meeting (Annual Pre-Budget Retreat)
- February 18, 2020, Regular Meeting
- February 18, 2020, Closed Session
- February 24, 2020, Special Meeting (Joint Meeting with Town of Boone)
- February 24, 2020, Special Meeting Closed Session (End of Joint Meeting with Town of Boone)

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Yates, moved to approve the February 13 & 14, 2020, special meeting minutes as presented.

VOTE: Aye-5
 Nay-0

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Yates, moved to approve the February 18, 2020, regular meeting minutes as presented.

VOTE: Aye-5
 Nay-0

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Yates, moved to approve the February 18, 2020, closed session minutes as presented.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Yates, moved to approve the February 24, 2020, special meeting minutes as presented.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Yates, moved to approve the February 24, 2020, special meeting closed session minutes as presented.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Welch called for additions and/or corrections to the March 17, 2020, agenda.

Commissioner Turnbow, seconded by Commissioner Wallin, moved to approve the March 17, 2020, agenda as presented.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) COMMUNITY UPDATE

Ms. Jennifer Greene, AppHealthCare Director, provided an update on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The report was for information only and, therefore, no action was required.

HIGH COUNTRY RESTORATION COALITION REQUESTS

Ms. Debbie Shetterly, High Country Restoration Coalition, was not able to attend the meeting. On her behalf, County Manager Geouque presented a proposed resolution committing the County to using and promoting native plants on County-owned property.

Commissioner Turnbow, seconded by Commissioner Wallin, moved to adopt the resolution in support of the use of native plants as presented.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

SHERIFF'S OFFICE VEHICLE PURCHASE

County Manager Geouque presented a bid for a 2020 Toyota Tacoma 4WD pickup from Modern Toyota, the North Carolina Sheriff's Association vendor. The cost for the vehicle, including tax and tag, was \$26,933.29. County Manager Geouque stated that the current cost exceeds the budgeted amount and therefore a budget amendment would be forthcoming recognizing additional narcotics funds.

Commissioner Turnbow, seconded by Vice-Chairman Kennedy, moved to award the bid for a 2020 Toyota Tacoma 4WD pickup in the amount of \$26,933.29 to Modern Toyota, the North Carolina Sheriff's Association vendor.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

SANITATION MATTERS

A. Engineering and Design Services for Landfill Improvements

Mr. Rex Buck, Operations Service Director, presented a proposal by McGill Associates for services pertaining to trailer storage area improvements, Innovation Drive improvements, and sediment basin improvements. These improvements were identified for commencement during the Annual Pre-Budget Retreat.

Mr. Buck recommended the acceptance of McGill Associates' proposal in the amounts listed for the following services:

1. Trailer Storage Area Improvement - \$25,800
2. Innovation Drive Improvements - \$74,700
3. Sediment Basin Improvements - \$61,160

Adequate funds were budgeted to cover the services for these improvements with future requests for construction approval to be forthcoming.

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Yates, moved to approve McGill Associates' proposal for trailer storage area improvements, in the amount of \$25,800; Innovation Drive improvements, in the amount of \$74,700; and Sediment Basin improvements, in the amount of \$61,160.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

B. Feasibility Study Regarding Organic Materials Management

Mr. Buck presented a proposal from Baker Advisors to conduct a feasibility study to determine the best management policy regarding organic materials. This issue was discussed at the Annual Pre-Budget Retreat and Board direction was for staff to engage Baker Advisors to conduct the study.

Baker Advisors proposal, in the amount of \$17,300, would examine the following options: 1) County Operated Local Retail Market; 2) County Operated Wholesale Market; and 3) Third-party Operation. Mr. Buck stated that adequate funds have been budgeted to cover the expense.

Commissioner Yates, seconded by Commissioner Wallin, moved to direct staff to engage Baker Advisors, in the amount of \$17,300, to conduct the study as presented.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

C. Sanitation Capital Expenditure Requests

Mr. Buck requested to purchase up to \$45,433 in solid waste containers from Baker Waste Equipment, Inc. on an as needed basis. The containers were needed to allow for the County to provide additional commercial solid waste services. Currently, the program is being tested in the 28607 zip code area with the desire to expand Countywide. The need for additional containers is due to the success thus far of the service. The lowest price for the containers has been received from Baker Waste Equipment.

Commissioner Yates, seconded by Commissioner Turnbow, moved to authorize the expenditure of funds for solid waste containers, not to exceed \$45,433, to ensure continued expansion of services.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

PROPOSED PROJECT ON AGING HOME CARE POLICY REVISIONS

Ms. Angie Boitnotte, Project on Aging Director, presented proposed amendments to the agency's operations and policies including requirements of the NC Division of Health Service Regulation.

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Yates, moved to approve the amendments to the Project on Aging Home Care Policy as presented by Ms. Boitnotte.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

TAX MATTERS

A. Monthly Collections Report

Tax Administrator, Mr. Larry Warren, presented the Tax Collections Report for the month of February 2020. The report was presented for information only and, therefore, no action was required.

B. Refunds and Releases

Mr. Warren presented the Refunds and Releases Report for February 2020 for Board approval:

TO BE TYPED IN MINUTE BOOK

Commissioner Yates, seconded by Vice-Chairman Kennedy, moved to approve the Refunds and Releases Report for February 2020 as presented.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

C. Board of Equalization and Review Schedule

Mr. Larry Warren, Tax Administrator, discussed the scheduling of the FY 2020 Board of Equalization and Review (E&R). Mr. Warren stated that the Board may create a special Board of Equalization and Review or, as in previous years, the Board of Commissioners may serve as the Board of Equalization and Review and include the County Manager to serve as an alternate member. The County Manager would only serve if a quorum could not be met otherwise.

Mr. Warren stated that there had only been fifteen appeals received as of this date with only five wanting to appear before the Board of E&R.

County Manager Geouque stated that the County would look for State Guidance if the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic interrupted the schedule.

County Attorney Capua stated that the County Attorneys needed to work on a policy for questions about meetings during the pandemic as it would be helpful to have everything coordinated Countywide rather than department by department.

County Manager Geouque stated that the County would air on the side of safety but would work with the County Attorney to continue to conduct meetings electronically; possibly including the Board of E&R meetings.

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Turnbow, resolved to establish the Board of Equalization and Review as follows:

MEMBERSHIP:

- Shall consist of the 5 member County Commissioners, each having one vote.
- Three members shall constitute a quorum.
- One alternate shall be appointed consisting of the County Manager.
- The alternate shall only serve to meet a quorum of the Board for a scheduled Board of Equalization and Review meeting.

POWERS AND DUTIES:

The powers and duties of this Board shall be as specified in NCGS 105-328 and Article 21 of the Machinery Act.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

Mr. Warren recommended the convening date for the Board of Equalization and Review be scheduled for Thursday April 16, 2020, at 4:00 P.M. and the adjournment be scheduled for Thursday April 23, 2020, at 5:00 P.M.

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Turnbow, moved to set the following dates for the Board of Equalization and Review:

- Convene on Thursday, April 16, 2020, at 4:00 P.M.
- Adjourn on Thursday, April 23, 2020, at 5:00 P.M.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

The Board of Equalization and Review has been compensated \$75 per meeting in the past.

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Turnbow, moved to establish the compensation rate for the Board of Equalization and Review at \$75.00 per meeting.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

D. Tax Lien Report

Mr. Warren presented the Tax Lien Report which lists delinquent tax bills that were liens on real property and requested authorization to advertise such liens between March 1 and June 30, 2020.

Commissioner Turnbow, seconded by Vice-Chairman Kennedy, moved to order the Tax Administrator to advertise the liens as requested.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

REQUEST TO SURPLUS PROPERTY – 2011 AUTOCAR FRONT LOADER TRASH TRUCK

Ms. Misty Watson, Finance Director, stated that the County Manager had previously been granted authority by the Board to sell surplus property under the \$30,000 threshold. Ms. Watson requested to surplus a 2011 Autocar Front Loader Trash Truck which could exceed the \$30,000 threshold.

Commissioner Yates, seconded by Commissioner Wallin, moved to surplus the 2011 Autocar Front Loader Trash Truck and approve disposal via electronic sale on GovDeals.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

BID AWARD REQUEST FOR AUDIO AND VIDEO SYSTEM FOR COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER MULTIPURPOSE ROOM

Mr. Drew Eggers, IT Director, presented a proposal from Freedom ElecTech, in the amount of \$21,500, for an audio/video system in the multipurpose room at the new Community Recreation Center (CRC). Freedom ElecTech were to also install the access control and security camera systems at the CRC; therefore, in an effort to provide continuity, staff recommended Freedom ElecTech to provide the audio and video system in the multipurpose room. Funds have been allocated in the current CRC budget to cover the expense.

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Turnbow, moved to accept Freedom ElecTech's proposal in the amount of \$21,500 for the audio and video system in the multipurpose room in the new Community Recreation Center.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

BID AWARD REQUEST FOR COURTROOM # 2 RENOVATIONS

Mr. Robert Marsh, Maintenance Director, presented a bid for millwork for Courtroom #2 renovations. Multiple contractors were solicited but only the following two bids were received:

Bidder	Millwork Cost	Furniture Refinishing	Replace Juror's Chairs
Goodman Millwork, Inc.	\$124,817.79	Not Included	Not Included
NC Correction Enterprise	\$39,160.00	Included	Included

The lack of contractors has delayed the project for several months. Based on the bids submitted and previous experience with North Carolina Correction Enterprise, staff recommended accepting the bid in the amount of \$39,160.

County Attorney Capua expressed concern, on behalf of the Bar Association, with the design and visibility of the witness as the attorneys will need eye contact with the witness. County Manager Geouque stated that the witness box was not elevated due to ADA (American's with Disabilities Act) requirements. Mr. Geouque also stated that the design had been in review for three years to date and was limited due to the size and shape of the space available.

After discussion, Commissioner Turnbow, seconded by Vice-Chairman Kennedy, moved to award the bid to North Carolina Correction Enterprise, in the amount of \$39,160, for millwork in the renovation of Courtroom # 2.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

PROPOSED FEE SCHEDULE FOR COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER

Mr. Stephen Poulos, Parks and Recreation Director, presented the proposed Membership and Fee Schedule for the new Community Recreation Center for formal approval. Draft proposals were reviewed by the Board at the January 21, 2020, Board meeting and again at the Annual Pre-Budget Retreat. Mr. Poulos stated that a daily Dry Ticket Fee, in the amount of \$4, was added for those wishing to watch their children but not participate themselves.

Commissioner Yates, seconded by Commissioner Turnbow, moved to formally adopt the Community Recreation Center Membership and Fee Schedule as presented with the addition of the Dry Ticket Fee.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

A. Proposed Renewal of Red Cross Lease

County Manager Geouque stated that the American Red Cross had requested renewal of their lease for office space which was set to expire March 31, 2020. The renewal was for an eight (8) year term with one dollar (\$1) rent per year. The required ten day notice was given and the lease was ready for approval, if so desired.

Commissioner Yates, seconded by Commissioner Wallin, moved to approve the lease with the American Red Cross as presented by the County Manager.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

B. Watauga Arts Council Update and Request for Lease Renewal

County Manager Geouque stated that the Watauga County Arts Council had requested renewal of their lease of County-owned property which was set to expire March 31, 2020. The new request was for a four (4) year term with automatic ninety (90) day renewals and rent in the amount of one dollar (\$1) per year. The required ten day notice was given and the lease was ready for approval, if so desired.

County Attorney Capua stated that she would prepare the renewal document with the term for four years and remove the clause for the music and craft school as that no longer exists.

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Turnbow, moved to approve the lease with Watauga County Arts Council and directed the County Attorney to prepare the appropriate documents.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

C. Proposed Lease with NC Forest Service for Office Space at the Cooperative Extension Building

County Manager Geouque stated that the North Carolina Forest Service had requested to lease one of the vacant offices in the Cooperative Extension building. Mr. Jim Hamilton, Director of Cooperative Extensions, had volunteered the space. The office space was needed due to the poor conditions of the Forest Service's modular unit located on the leased space at the County's old landfill. The office space lease would be temporary until the Forest Service could find a new location. The County Manager has offered their current site allowing them to remove and replace the modular unit which would be the most cost effective option. However, the State had given the Forest Service direction to pursue the acquisition of land and the construction of a new facility. This option will not likely happen due to local land prices and the limited budget set forth for the project.

By consensus, the Board gave direction for the County Manager to propose a one-year lease to the NC Forest Service for office space in the Cooperative Extension building.

D. Boards and Commissions

County Manager Geouque presented the following for consideration:

Economic Development Commission (EDC)

EDC member Ms. Savannah Garland had to resign due to accepting an out-of-town. A Volunteer Application was received from Mr. Kelly Coffey for consideration to fill her unexpired term. This is a first reading.

Commissioner Turnbow, seconded by Commissioner Yates, moved to waive the second reading and appoint Mr. Kelly Coffey to the Economic Development Commission to fill the unexpired term of Ms. Savannah Garland.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

Tourism Development Authority (TDA)

The following Watauga County TDA Board member's terms expired at the end of February:

- Tina Houston of Reid's Café & Catering and The Beacon Event facility
- Matt Vincent of VPC Builders (Current TDA Board Chair)
- Lisa Cooper of Mast General Store.

All three are willing and eligible to be re-appointed to 3-year terms and the TDA Board supports the re-nomination of each of them.

Commissioner Yates, seconded by Commissioner Wallin, moved to waive the second reading and appoint Ms. Tina Houston, Mr. Matt Vincent, and Ms. Lisa Cooper to the Tourism Development Authority for three-year terms.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

Appointment of TDA Chair

The TDA Board Chair is appointed by the Board of Commissioner. Mr. Matt Vincent is eligible to continue in that role or you may appoint a new chair. A list of all TDA Board Members was provided for consideration.

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Turnbow, moved to appoint Mr. Matt Vincent as the Chair for the Tourism Development Authority.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

E. Announcements

County Manager Geouque announced the following:

- Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute invites you to attend the Building Dedication and Open House on Tuesday, April 7, 2020, at 5:30 P.M.
- The CCC&TI Board also invites you to join them for a combined Board meeting with the Board of Education at 4:00 P.M. prior to the building dedication/open house. This meeting is typically in May; however, it is being combined with the open house this year.
- The Watauga Compassionate Community Initiative 2020 Conference will be held on Saturday, May 16, 2020, from 8:00 A.M. to 3:15 P.M. at Watauga High School. The Opening Keynote Speaker will be Brandon Wrencher and the Keynote Speaker will be Allison Sampson-Jackson. Please let Anita know if you wish to attend and she will be glad to RSVP on your behalf.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

CLOSED SESSION

At 6:56 P.M., Commissioner Wallin, seconded by Commissioner Yates, moved to enter Closed Session to discuss Attorney/Client Matters, per G. S. 143-318.11(a)(3).

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Turnbow, moved to resume the open meeting at 7:30 P.M.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

ADJOURN

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Wallin, moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 P.M.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

John Welch, Chairman

ATTEST:

Anita J. Fogle, Clerk to the Board

AGENDA ITEM 3:

APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 7, 2020, AGENDA

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AGENDA ITEM 4:

WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ELECTRONIC MEETING POLICY

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

Staff has drafted an electronic meeting policy to navigate the County through the COVID-19 crisis. The County Attorney has reviewed the policy.

Board action is required to approve the policy as presented.



Watauga County Board of Commissioners Electronic Meeting Policy

I. Purpose

Public bodies that administer the legislative, policy-making, quasi-judicial, administrative, and advisory functions of North Carolina and its political subdivisions exist solely to conduct the people's business. It is the public policy of North Carolina that the hearings, deliberations, and actions of these bodies be conducted openly. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Watauga County Board of Commissioners has declared a State of Emergency, effective March 20, 2020, suspending all public meetings and requiring them to be conducted electronically.

II. Applicability

This Policy applies to all boards and commissions established or authorized by the Watauga County Board of Commissioners.

III. Recitals: Policy Considerations

This Policy is disseminated with the intent and applied so as to:

1. Allow members of a governing body to conduct meetings electronically;
2. Provide continuity of County operations and business;
3. Balance ease of a voting members' access to and participation in orderly proceedings, especially where there are public safety concerns that pose impediments to physical attendance;
4. Comply with North Carolina's Open Meetings Laws, and any amendments thereto, in a manner consistent with the requirements, while allowing for the conduct of County business and operations through electronic means.

IV. Definitions

1. **Meeting** - a gathering of a majority of the governing body of a public body for the purpose of taking official action upon business.
2. **North Carolina Open Meeting's Law** - which is codified as Article 33C of the North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 143, requiring that, with the exception of Closed

Sessions, , each official meeting of a public body shall be open to the public, and any person is entitled to attend such a meeting.

3. **Quorum** - A majority of the membership of the Board of Commissioners and any other Board or Commission that is subject to this policy constitutes a quorum. If a member who was present at the onset of the meeting has exited without being excused by majority vote of the remaining members present, he shall be counted as present for the purposes of determining whether a quorum is present.
4. **Official Action** - includes receiving information, deliberating, making recommendations, establishing policy, making decisions, and taking final action (i.e. voting). Ind. Code § 5-14-1.5-2(d).
5. **Public Body** - any elected or appointed authority, board, commission, or committee of the County that (i) is composed of two or more members and (ii) exercises or is authorized to exercise a legislative, policy-making, quasi-judicial, administrative, or advisory function. Public body does not include a meeting solely among the professional staff of a public body.
6. **Official meeting** - a meeting, assembly, or gathering together at any time or place or the simultaneous communication by conference telephone or other electronic means of a majority of the members of a public body for the purpose of conducting hearings, participating in deliberations, or voting upon or otherwise transacting the public business within the jurisdiction, real or apparent, of the public body. However, a social meeting or other informal assembly or gathering together of the members of a public body does not constitute an official meeting unless called or held to evade the spirit and purposes of the North Carolina Open Meetings Law.
7. **Closed Session** – means a meeting from which the public is excluded pursuant to N.C. Gen. State 143-318.11, except persons that the governing body may admit as necessary to carry out its purpose.

V. Policy Provisions

1. **Meeting Notice:** All electronic meetings shall comply with North Carolina General Statute 153A-40, to wit:
 - a) **Regular Meetings** - the Board of Commissioners shall hold a regular meeting at least once a month, and may hold more frequent regular meetings.
 - b) **Special Meetings** - the chairman or a majority of the members of the Board may at any time call a special meeting of the Board of Commissioners by signing a written notice stating the time and place of the meeting and the subjects to be considered. The person or persons calling the meeting shall cause the notice to be delivered to the chairman and each other member of the Board or left at the usual dwelling place of each at least 48 hours before the meeting and shall cause a copy of the notice to be posted on the County's bulletin Board and website at least 48 hours before the meeting. Only those items of business specified in the notice may

be transacted at a special meeting, unless all members are present or those not present have signed a written waiver.

- c) **Emergency Called Meetings** - if a special meeting is called to deal with an emergency, the notice requirements of this subsection do not apply. However, the person or persons calling such a special meeting shall take reasonable action to inform the other members and the public of the meeting. Only business connected with the emergency may be discussed at a meeting called pursuant to this paragraph. In addition to the procedures set out in this subsection, a person or persons calling a special or emergency meeting of the Board of Commissioners shall comply with the notice requirements of Article 33B of General Statutes Chapter 143.
2. **Commencement of a Meeting:** A call-in telephone number along with access code will be emailed to Commissioners. At any electronic meeting, a quorum of the Board must be online via conference call or video for the meeting to be held. The Chairman will call role to ensure a majority of the Board is present online. In the event a majority of the Board is not present, the meeting will be cancelled and rescheduled for another date.
3. **Meeting Protocol:** All electronic meetings shall be conducted with and follow the same standard policies and procedures as an in-person meeting of the Board of Commissioners to the extent reasonably possible. All electronic meetings will be recorded and the recording will be attached to the online corresponding Board packet for the next meeting.
4. **Roll Call Voting:** All votes of the Board shall be taken by roll call. During such a vote, each voting member will be called individually by name and requested to cast their vote aloud.
5. **Public Comment:** Citizens wishing to provide public comments during electronic meetings may send comments to public.comments@watgov.org. Comments received by 5:00 PM the day prior to the official meeting date will be read by the Chairman and made a part of the official record. Board members and/or Commissioners will be given an opportunity to respond to comments submitted. Comments received after the 5:00 PM deadline will be read at the next regularly scheduled meeting and made a part of the official record with the same opportunity to comment.
6. **Meeting Minutes:** Minutes of electronic meetings shall follow the normal format as in-person meetings.
7. **Media Access:** Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure local media has access to the electronic meetings, including a call-in number and access code being provided to for access to meetings.

VI. Effective Period

This Policy shall become effect upon the Declaration of a State of Emergency by the Chairman or a majority of the Board and will remain in full force and effect until the expiration of the Declared State of Emergency.

AGENDA ITEM 5:

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) COMMUNITY UPDATE

Ms. Jennifer Greene, AppHealthCare Director, will provide an update on the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The report is for information only; therefore no action is required.

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AGENDA ITEM 6:

REQUEST FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (CIP) FUNDS

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

Ms. Ly Marze, Watauga County School Finance Director, will request the Board release \$571,512 from the School CIP balance for the enclosed projects.

Board action is required to release the \$571,512 from the School CIP balance.



WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Margaret E. Gragg Education Center
175 Pioneer Trail, Boone, NC 28607

TO: Deron Geouque, County Manager
Misty Watson, Finance Director
Watauga County

FROM: Dr. Scott Elliott, Superintendent
Ly Marze, Finance Officer
Watauga County Schools

DATE: March 30, 2020

RE: CIP Funds Request

Watauga County Schools respectfully requests the release of \$529,290 from the CIP funds reserved for the school district to fund the following projects:

Pavement Repair/Resurface	160,000
Roof Maintenance	45,000
Security Cameras	100,000
HVAC / Sewer Pump Replacements	10,000
Repeater System	19,000
Fuel Island	30,000
Classroom Presentation Technology	80,000
Facilities - Furniture/Equipment	55,290
Facilities - Central Office Renovation	30,000

We also request the release of \$42,222 from the Long Term CIP funds for the carryover of the Pavement Repair project funded from fiscal year 2018-19.

Thank you for your continued support of Watauga County Schools.

AGENDA ITEM 7:**REQUEST FOR FUNDS TO UPGRADE AND PROFESSIONALIZE THE DOC WATSON MUSEUM AT THE HISTORIC COVE CREEK SCHOOL****MANAGER'S COMMENTS:**

At the September 18, 2018 Board meeting the Cove Creek Preservation & Development requested the Board authorize \$15,000 for matching funds for a \$30,000 grant. The purpose of the grant was to hire a museum consultant. The purpose of the museum consultant was to enhance the Doc Watson Museum in the historic Cove Creek High School. The museum consultant will review the available space and develop a master plan to ensure the feasibility of the project.

Ms. James requested Watauga County partner by committing to provide the \$15,000. The grant application was due on October 1, 2018, and required the commitment at the time of the submission. Discussion was held regarding this being an appropriate request for the Tourism Development Authority (TDA); however, the TDA's next meeting was October 9, 2018, which was after the October 1 deadline.

Commissioner approval was given contingent upon Ms. James receiving the grant award, a match of half of the grant, in the amount of \$15,000, with the Board of Commissioners to discuss with the Tourism Development Authority where best for the funds to be allocated from.

Mr. David Tyner, Cove Creek Preservation & Development, will now request the Board approve the \$15,000 match for the grant. Due to the potential financial impact of COVID-19, staff would only recommend Board approval of the request if the TDA provided the full match.

Board approval would be required to authorize the \$15,000 for the match.

Cove Creek Preservation and Development

**P.O. Box 344
Sugar Grove, NC 28679**

March 16, 2020



RE: Cove Creek Preservation and Development Request for Matching Grant with Blue Ridge National Heritage Area from Watauga County made on September 18, 2018.

Project Title: Upgrading the Doc and Merle Watson Folk Art Museum

Dear Deron,

I contacted Wright Tilley with TDA last week in hopes to confirm our matching grant with the TDA approved by County Commission on September 18, 2018. He was not aware of this approval by the county commission and referred me to you. I understand a lot of time has passed since this approval was made but I will try to explain. Our museum plans were abruptly interrupted due to Karen James having to resign due to family health problems. With Karen's resignation, I asked Nancy Watson, sole legal owner and heir to Doc Watson's estate, who Karen was working with if she could assist and consult us. Nancy offered to assist us as she knew the wishes her dad wanted for the museum. Unfortunately, Nancy with her ongoing existing health problems became very ill and we had no choice but wait until she was able to help. She has recovered enough to assist us with more Doc and Merle memorabilia and history of Watson family, but not well enough to be a part on advice with needed museum professional upgrade.

In the last few months we have been fortunate with museum consultation assistance from Jeff Futch, Regional Supervisor of the Western Office of the North Carolina Dept. of Natural and Cultural Resources located in Asheville. Since January, he has visited our museum on two occasions and on last visit, employees from Mountain Gateway Museum in Old Fort, NC and Blowing Rock Museum came at his invitation to assist with additional museum upgrade advice.

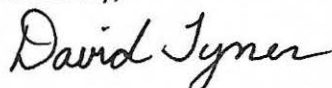
With the advice from these museum experts and due to the unexpected resignation of Karen James and sickness of Nancy Watson, I have requested Rob Bell, Senior Director of Programs for Blue Ridge National Heritage to consider a grant change and extension to allow the needed improvements to the museum.

I have attached my letter of March 6th to him and his email confirming their board approval to make the changes requested with 2 conditions needed to make the changes we have requested. I have already submitted a work plan, floor plan of museum, and several pictures to Rob to submit to the State Historic Preservation Office for their approval. If I need to submit these to you or to Mr. Tilley at TDA, I will do so.

My hope is the county commission is fine with the grant change and can still honor the matching grant originally voted to approve. The BRNHA grant is only good if we can obtain the TDA match or a match from some other source. I understand from conversation with Mr. Tilley the TDA board must also approve matching grants and they don't meet again until April 21st.

I have already submitted a work plan, floor plan of museum, and several pictures to Rob to submit to the State Historic Preservation Office for their approval. If I need to submit these to you or to Mr. Tilley at TDA, I can do so. I have also submitted to BRNHA their required Project Budget Forms, Line Item Budget Timeline and people involved with estimates of work if needed by you or TDA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Syner".

CCP&D Board Chairman

Cove Creek Preservation and Development

**P.O. Box 344
Sugar Grove, NC 28679**

March 6, 2020

040720 BCC Meeting



RE: Cove Creek Preservation and Development
Grant Entity Identifier: 117098595
Project Title: Upgrading the Doc and Merle Watson Folk Art Museum

Dear Rob,

We are very thankful to you and Angie Chandler to ask the BRNHA board to evaluate our grant request change and grant extension to make improvements to the museum. We are extremely fortunate to have recent help and advice from Jeff Futch of NC Dept. of Natural and Cultural Resources, Jesse Bricker of the Mountain Gateway Museum, Zach Dressel of the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum, and Heather South, Lead Archivist Western Regional Archives for advice on shelving . We believe we have a good plan to make the museum a more professional looking museum that Doc and Merle Watson would be proud of. Our 1941 rock stone building which is on the National Register of Historic Places is the perfect place for the museum. Without the help of Nancy Watson the daughter of Doc and Rosa Lee Watson and heir to the Doc Watson name, it would have been impossible to move forward with the project. We are fortunate she has recovered from her illness and is able to continue in her help with the museum project. She has donated most of the memorabilia and her knowledge of the Watson family History is irreplaceable as well as the artifacts she has donated recently. I understand upon approval of the grant request changes we are committed to the publicity requirements received from Angie Chandler back on April 10, 2019. If any additions or other requirements have changed since April please forward to me.

In the last day, I have run into an unexpected need to reconfirm the matching funds from the Watauga TDA originally approved by the Watauga County Commission. I understand approval of the extension & revised budget would be made contingent upon at least a one-to-one match (from the TDA and/or from other sources).

Attached is the Project Budget Form and answers to our timeline with written estimate by McGuire Construction, the highest budget item.

Sincerely,

CCP&D Board Chairman

Rob Bell Mar 13, 2020, 3:16 PM (3 days ago)

to me

Hi David,

I hope you've enjoyed some time off this week.

Good news - Our board approved the extension request and change of scope. It's conditional upon two things. First is confirmation of matching funds from the TDA and/or another source. The second is the blessing of the State Historic Preservation Office since the building is listed on the National Register.

Your project is already in the State Historic Preservation Office system, since I filed paperwork with them to award the grant. But they will need to review your new work plan. When you get back to your office, please send me a short description of how the new exhibits and storage renovations will affect the building interior, specifically the walls, ceiling, floor, and any doors or windows. If you could provide a floor plan and a few photos, that would be helpful, too. I'll need digital copies so I can share them easily. These details will help speed their review. Thanks!

Rob

Rob Bell
Senior Director of Programs

Blue Ridge National Heritage Area - Satellite Office
176 Riceville Road
Asheville, NC 2880

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AGENDA ITEM 8:**REQUEST FOR NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION TO PARTNER WITH APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY ON GRANT PROJECT FOR VETERAN FARMERS****MANAGER'S COMMENTS:**

Mr. Jim Hamilton, Cooperative Extension Director, will request the Board approve a proposal for Watauga County Cooperative Extension and Watauga County to support Appalachian State University's proposal to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (National Institute of Food and Agriculture) entitled Going Whole Hog: Sustainable Livestock and Agroforestry Training for Military Veterans.

Watauga County Extension (Watauga County) would enter into a subcontract for the performance period of September 15, 2020 to September 14, 2023. Mr. Eddy Labus, Livestock Extension Agent, will serve as the main contact for the proposal. The work performed for the project will be to create learning modules for veterans entering into agriculture...primarily pig production. The estimated cost of the proposed subcontract will not exceed \$25,000. Grant monies will be reimbursed to Watauga County to cover Mr. Labus's portion of salary and fringe over three years for his efforts on the project. The proposal was submitted to the USDA in March and confirmation of award will be in a few months.

Board approval is required to commit the \$25,000 in the event the proposal is funded.

NC Cooperative Extension partnering with App State University on grant project for veteran farmers

Watauga County Cooperative Extension and Watauga County have proposed commitment to support *Appalachian State University's* proposal to the *U.S. Department of Agriculture (National Institute of Food and Agriculture)* entitled *Going Whole Hog: Sustainable Livestock and Agroforestry Training for Military Veterans*. Watauga County Extension (Watauga County) will enter into a subcontract for the performance period of September 15, 2020 to September 14, 2023. The Watauga County Cooperative Extension's Principal Investigator on this proposal is Mr. Eddy Labus, Livestock Extension Agent. The work to be performed by Mr. Labus for the purposes of the project will be to create learning modules for veterans entering into agriculture...primarily pig production. The estimated cost of the proposed subcontract will not exceed a total of \$25,000. Grant monies will be reimbursed to Watauga County to cover Mr. Labus's portion of salary and fringe over three years for his efforts on the project. The proposal was submitted to the USDA in March and ASU/county should hear back in a few months whether or not the proposal was accepted for funding. We request & recommend that the county commissioners approve this funding which would offset Mr. Labus's county portion of NC Cooperative Extension salary & fringe.

AGENDA ITEM 9:

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC) ALLOCATION RECOMMENDATION
TO HIGH COUNTRY FOOD HUB**

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

The EDC approved the request from BRWIA for funds to purchase a cooler in the amount of \$9,841.55. The EDC is now requesting the Commissioners approve an allocation of \$9,841.55 from the Economic Development Capital Reserve Account.

Board action is required to approve the allocation of \$9,841.55 from the Economic Development Capital Reserve Account.



Watauga Economic Development Commission High Country Food Hub Walk-in Cooler Expansion Project

3.4.2020

Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture
PO Box 67
Boone, NC 28607

Overview of Accomplishments Due to EDC Support

Thanks to the support of the Watauga Economic Development Commission, the High Country Food Hub has seen steady growth in its core components — a central storage facility for farmers and opening new markets to local food producers.

2019 Accomplishments include:

- 378 new customers
- 642 total customers placing 4,938 orders
- \$205,938.80 in sales (Total 2018 Sales: \$103,128.70)
- 65 active producers, listing 1000+ product varieties in 2019
- Expanded storage capacity to include 1 new freezer and a root crop storage area
- Held 4 Farm to Plate Dinners and participated in many community events
- Opened new wholesale market channels
- Profiled by All About Women Magazine, Mountain Times, Watauga Democrat, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and WNC Magazine

Each week, 84% of dollars spent at the Food Hub is paid to High Country producers for their products. This resulted in almost \$173,000 in income for 2019.

Consumer Demand Requires Additional Walk-in Storage Capacity

For the last 8 months, the Food Hub's walk-in storage has been at capacity. Staff temporarily manage this with our root crop storage area while we have sought grant funds to build a second walk-in cooler.

EarthFare's closing offers many Watauga residents the opportunity to orient their buying habits toward locally-grown and made products. In February 2020, the Food Hub saw 42 new customers ordering and 112 additional customer registrations (compared to 23 new customers ordering and 51 new Food Hub customer accounts created in January 2020). This growth offers an opportunity to significantly expand the Food Hub's economic impact, but is limited by our current infrastructure.

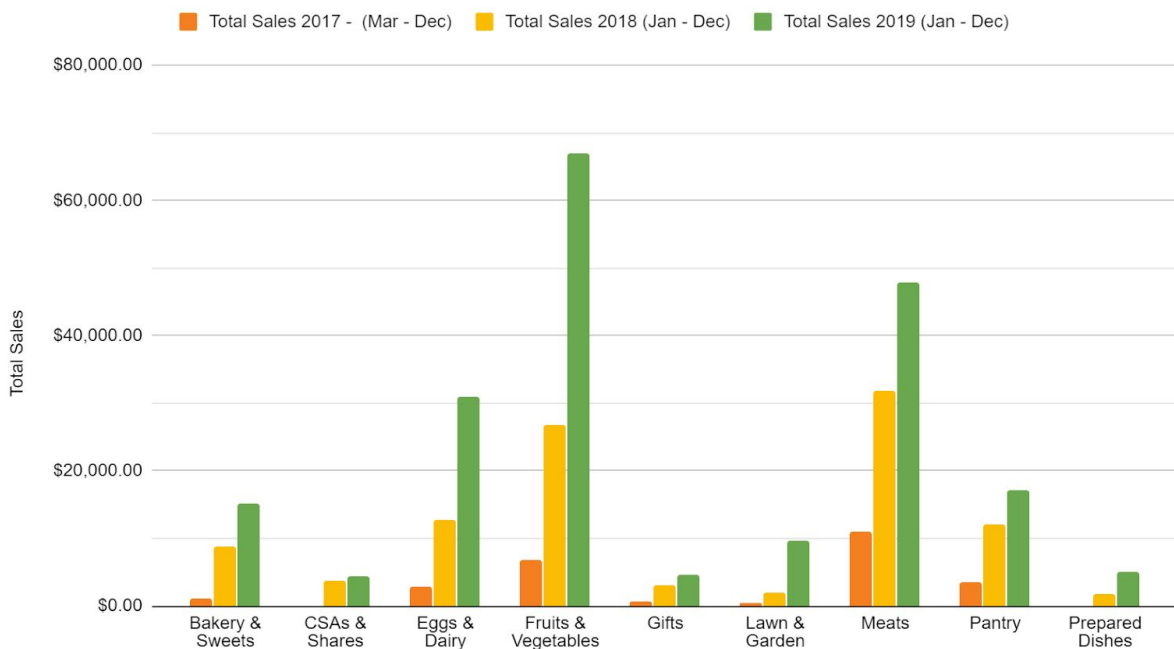


Request

1. Reallocate \$8,158.45 from 2018 "Serving Target Customers" (marketing) line item to "Build Efficiencies" (infrastructure) line item.
2. Grant \$9,841.55 to purchase a walk-in cooler and shelving units.

The Food Hub's growth occurs alongside farmers' increasing supply of year-round vegetable production and the additional availability of eggs and dairy products.

Total Sales by Category - 2017 to 2019



By investing in this expansion project, the High Country Food Hub will be able to:

- Serve 200 new customers or accommodate \$8,000 additional sales each week
- Serve more wholesale customers such as restaurants, Hunger & Health Coalition, and daycares and summer camps
- Support 36 vegetable, dairy, cheese, and value-added producers that sell through the Food Hub (23 businesses or 64% grow or make their products in Watauga County)
- Establish multiple pick-up days at the High Country Food Hub location
- Participate in NCSU's Vacation Supported Agriculture program and establish satellite pick-up locations throughout Watauga County in Blowing Rock, Valle Crucis, and health community by Appalachian Regional Healthcare System

Project Budget

	Watauga EDC Grant Expenses	Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture Match Expenses	Total
Build efficiencies			
9'x20' Walk-in Cooler estimate by Jim Richardson	\$15,000.00		\$15,000.00
10 shelving units and freight	\$3,000.00	\$442.67	\$3,442.67
Project Management Salary (45 hours)		\$900.00	\$900.00
sub total	\$18,000.00	\$1,342.67	\$19,342.67
Indirect Costs for Project	(2020 Grant & Match)	\$1,118.42	\$1,118.42
Total	\$18,000.00	\$2,461.09	\$20,461.09

How the Food Hub Grew in 2019

To move the Food Hub toward self-sustainability, BRWIA enacted a 3 part plan:

1. Build efficiencies

After two years of significant producer and customer growth, we better understand how we can make our internal systems more efficient. This impacted producer and customer experiences, the program's operating expenses, and the ability of the Food Hub to serve more community members.

2019 work:

- Purchased uniform storage bins with dividers to organize food products
- Purchased glass-front cooler for cold products to be stored and displayed
- Implemented new community volunteer program to build customer loyalty and increase customer pickup experiences
- Implemented new, lean methods to aggregate customer orders

Future work:

- Develop funding for and build out new walk-in cooler to meet online marketplace growth
- Develop funding for and purchase additional stainless steel tables and shelving for organizing orders

2. Build value

After two years of operating expenses and feedback from producers, we have a better understanding of the impact that the Food Hub has on local food businesses and our local food system. Farmers are scaling up and reorienting their enterprises and markets because of the Food Hub's infrastructure and additional market channel.

We also have a better understanding of the program's operating costs and how we can meet those costs while demonstrating the value of the service that we are providing.

2019 work:

- Implemented new Storage Rental Fees & Systems
- Implemented new Service Fees & Offerings
 - Developed and refined quality control mechanisms for food safety, packing, labeling, storage, and inventory tracking
 - Conducted marketing through a variety of media outlets
 - Developed new individual, wholesale and institutional customers
 - Held 1:1 production planning and sales analysis meetings with each producer to help them work toward growing and sustaining their business
 - Held a full-day training for producers to scale their business with topics focusing on defining market channels, recordkeeping, postharvest handling, and food safety regulations
 - Coordinated group/bulk purchasing to order materials at a discounted rate such as boxes, labels, etc.



Future work:

- Implement Producer Membership structure
- Further develop new market channel opportunities related to small scale institutions and restaurants
- Further develop quality control and food safety mechanisms and trainings for producers

3. Serve target customers

Everything that the Food Hub does is aimed at helping customers achieve *their* goal. It is with this focus that the Hub adds unique value and keeps customers coming back.



Who are Food Hub customers *and what is THEIR goal?*

Seasonal visitors. *Buy healthy local and authentic food in a convenient way.*

Local resident families. *Buy and cook affordable healthy local food in a convenient way.*

Local "Foodies" and Restaurant Chefs. *Support local businesses, buy interesting, healthy local food, learn about the local food system.*

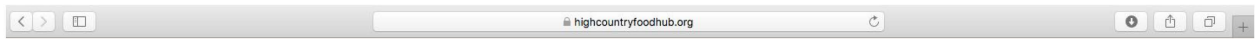
Institutional Food Buyers. *Buy healthy local food at a low cost in a convenient way.*

Farmers/producers. *Grow and sustain their business.*

2019 work:

- Developed targeted marketing campaigns to recruit new customers
- Redeveloped the Food Hub's website and improved the customer's online experience
- Offered subscription plan for milk
- Extended customer pickup times to more convenient hours and offer multiple drop off times for producers
- Offered recipes and shopping lists around specific events (e.g., tailgating, 4th of July Picnic)
- Hosted ticketed dinners at area restaurants (e.g., Gamekeeper, New Public House, Gideon Ridge, Reid's Cafe) featuring Food Hub products where Food Hub producers and staff educated chefs and patrons about the value of buying/eating local food
- Partnered with Cooperative Extension and Blowing Rock Art & History Museum to feature special events related to local food, including a Sherri Castle event
- Held a 1-day Fill Your Freezer Sale that generated \$4,194.00 for 6 producers





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Need a little more grass-fed, free-range, locally grown food and hand crafted goods in your life?
We've got you covered.

operated by **Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture**

A large hero banner with a background image of hands holding fresh green leafy vegetables. The text is overlaid on the image.

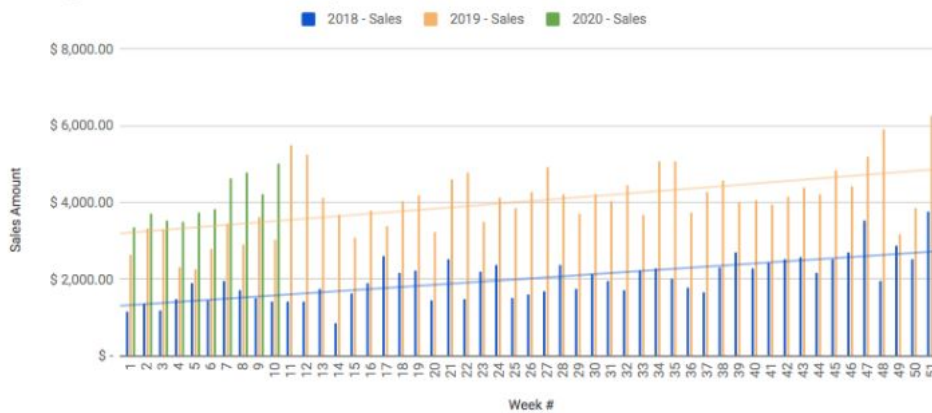
Future work:

- Develop satellite pickup locations in Blowing Rock, Valle Crucis, and Boone’s Health District
- Continue Farm to Plate Dinner Series
- Expand Subscription Products to include vegetables, compost, and eggs
- Further develop small scale institution wholesale market channel, including continued work with Hunger & Health Coalition to better meet the needs of their clients
- Refine marketing campaigns to target specific customer audiences

By the Numbers

The Food Hub has seen significant growth over the last year. The following charts and figures describe that growth:

Weekly Sales - 2018 - 2020 Comparison



Weekly Customer Count - 2018 - 2020 Comparison

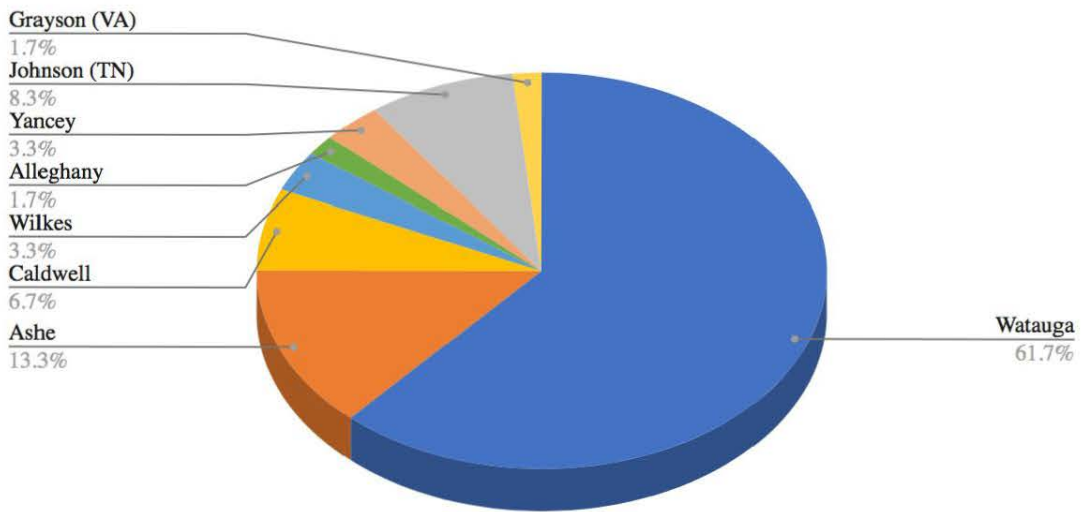


2019 Data Points

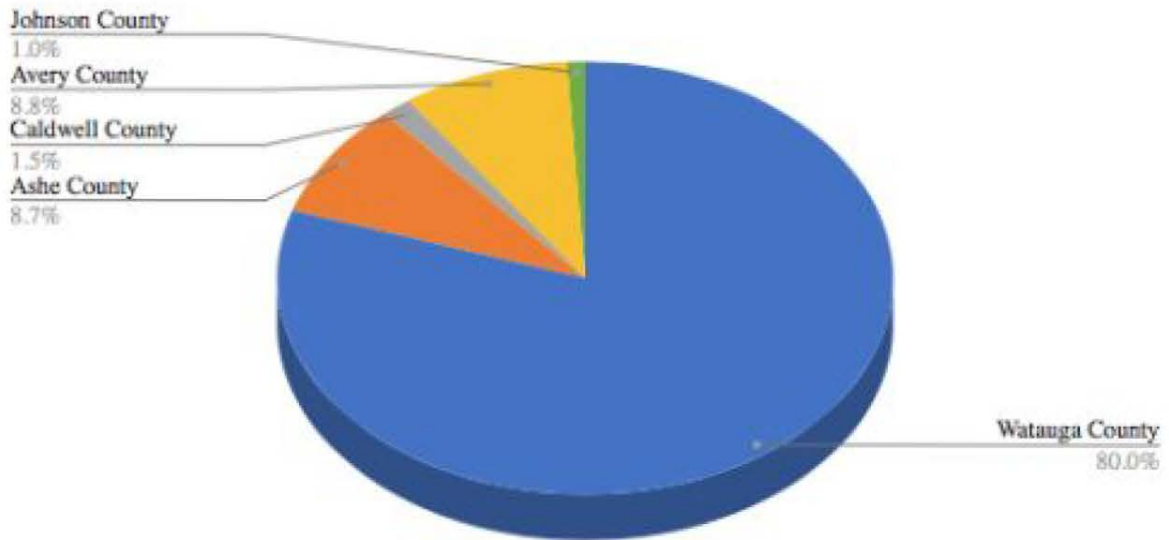
Weekly Sales Overview	
Week #	51
Pickup Date	12/18/2019
Total Sales This Week (new record)	\$6,286.89
# of Customer	113
# of New Customers	10
Total # of Orders Placed in 2019	4,938
Total Sales for 2019	\$205,938.80
Total Sales for 2018 (Jan - Dec)	\$103,128.70
Double Up Food Bucks Donations	\$30.00
Total Donated to DUFB	\$2,215.00
BRWIA Friend of Agriculture donations	\$5.00
Total BRWIA Friend of Agriculture donations	\$309.00
# of producers listed one or more products	53
# of producers who sold products	46
# of new customers in 2019	378
Average weekly sales for 2019	\$4,038.02
Weekly Average for December 2019	\$4,450.40
Total Sales for December 2019 (only 3 weeks)	\$13,351.20

Note: Average weekly sales for September-October 2019: \$4,156.62

2019 Food Hub Producers by County



Food Hub Customers by County



Break-even Point & Weekly Sales Goal

Is the Food Hub breaking even? The Food Hub's staff is frequently asked how sustainable the program is as a social enterprise.

We believe that the Food Hub is sustainable and that it is a model for our region.

The true break-even number, though, is difficult to determine. Several of the Food Hub's overhead expenses fall within Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture's overhead expenses, which are paid for by community members' donations, by business sponsorships, and by grants.

However, every year, the Food Hub takes a deep dive into its expenses to determine our break-even point and to set new growth goals. **We have done this with the support of expert-partners like Freda Smith, CPA and Startup High Country's Velocity Labs.** Each time we do this, we better understand our costs and we build efficiencies into our operations.

For 2018-2019, we updated our weekly sales goal from \$3,500 to \$5,000. We believe that \$5,000 in weekly sales as a break-even goal will allow the program to better meet our community's demand for local food in the short term, and see the weekly sales goal continuing to increase over the next couple years as our capacity to serve more customers increases with additional infrastructure and staff.

As we continue to grow in 2020 with record sales numbers and look toward continued strong growth as more vegetables become available, we are revising our break-even goal again.

Date of Break-even Analysis	Break-even Weekly Sales Goal	Weekly Sales	Weekly Customers
May 16, 2018	\$3,500	\$,1461.91	36
July 11, 2018	\$5,000	\$2,371.03	60
October 30, 2019	\$5,000	\$4,211.50	98
February 2020	\$5,000	\$4,382.01 (avg)	115.5 (avg)
March 4, 2020	\$5,872	\$5,039.52	118
2020 Target Goal: \$8,000 in weekly sales with 200 customers 2021 Target Goal: \$12,000 in weekly sales with 300 customers			

Financial Investment by the Watauga EDC 2018-Present

The Food Hub is at a critical point in its development. Significant enthusiasm and support for its online farmers' market and services are evident in the investments already made by local government officials, public and private grantors, and 60 local food businesses including small-scale family farms and food entrepreneurs.

It is clear that the Watauga EDC's 2018 investment in the High Country Food Hub significantly impacted the social enterprise's growth.

The High Country Food Hub plays an integral role in building a strong local food economy. The diversity of stakeholders who benefit from its success demonstrate why the Watauga EDC's investment in the Food Hub continues to have broad and positive impacts on the economic wellbeing of Watauga County.

As of February 2020, BRWIA has utilized a 2018-2019 grant from the Watauga EDC in the following ways:

Watauga EDC Grant Expenses	
Build efficiencies	
Uniform storage bins w/ dividers and other equipment	\$1,657.43
Glass front refrigerator	\$700.00
sub total	\$2,357.43
Build value	
Program supplies	\$7,959.64
Travel	\$39.27
Professional development	\$150.00
sub total	\$8,148.91
Serve target customers	
Marketing & advertising, including website and graphic design, rack cards, and event promotions and development	\$6,335.21
sub total	\$6,335.21
Total	\$16,841.553
Remaining	\$8,158.45

To complete the grant, Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture requests funding to purchase a walk-in cooler and shelving. This will create a clear plan for the next phase of its 2020 growth.

Future Growth Strategies

The Food Hub's growth has been significant. Its impacts on customers new access to local food and producers access to an additional market channel is important to the health of the community. To leverage this growth, BRWIA plans to further refine and develop the Food Hub's growth strategies.

1. Build Efficiencies

Walk-in Cooler: The Food Hub has outgrown its current walk-in cooler and is in need of an additional cold space to meet online marketplace growth.

Stainless steel tables and shelving: To increase storage capacity and to make the aggregation of orders more efficient, the Food Hub needs to purchase additional stainless steel tables and shelving.

2. Build value

Producer Membership: The Food Hub plans to introduce a producer membership structure to add value within its producer group and increase capacity to offer more trainings and technical assistance.

Market Channel Opportunities: The Food Hub plans to work with producers so that their production planning includes new opportunities related to small scale institutions and restaurants.

Quality Control and Food Safety: The Food Hub will continue to develop internal protocols and trainings for producers that will ensure customers receive the highest quality food.

3. Serve target customers

Satellite Pickup Locations: The Food Hub plans to continue to develop strategies for new and alternative pickup locations in Blowing Rock, Valle Crucis, and Boone's Health District.

Farm to Plate Dinner Series: Building upon the success of the 2019 series, the Food Hub plans to partner with additional restaurants for ticketed events that educate and inspire customers to purchase local food through the Food Hub. This series regularly introduced new customers to the Food Hub.

Subscription Products: The Food Hub introduced milk as a subscription product and plans to work with producers to identify and launch products like vegetables, compost, and eggs.

Small Scale Institutions: Over the last year, the Food Hub has connected with several new small scale institutions, including continued work with Hunger & Health Coalition. The Food Hub plans to continue to work with the small scale institutions to better meet the needs of their clients and educate and inspire their clients about local food.

Marketing Campaigns: BRWIA plans to continue to develop specific marketing campaigns to ensure continued customer growth. This will occur with the assistance of a marketing and development consultant and with data from our annual customer surveys.

AGENDA ITEM 10:**BID AWARD REQUEST FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE GUY FORD ROAD PADDLE ACCESS****MANAGER'S COMMENTS:**

Mr. Joe Furman, Planning and Inspections Director, recently opened bids for completion of the Guy Ford Road paddle access. The low bid, from Tri-County Paving, Inc. of West Jefferson, is \$117,697.48. Current funding available from TDA is \$110,000. Mr. Furman and the engineer are reviewing ways to reduce the amount of the contract and he is going to request additional funds from the TDA, neither of which could be completed by the agenda deadline.

Mr. Furman is hopeful to have more information by the time of the Commissioners' meeting on April 7, 2020 meeting. In order to move the project forward, Mr. Furman will request the Commissioners award the contract to Tri-County Paving in the amount, \$117,697.48, contingent upon either 1) the amount can be reduced to the current funds available, or 2) Additional funds are forthcoming from the TDA.

Board approval is required to award the contract to Tri-County Paving in the amount, \$117,697.48 contingent upon 1) the amount can be reduced to the current funds available, or 2) additional funds are forthcoming from the TDA.

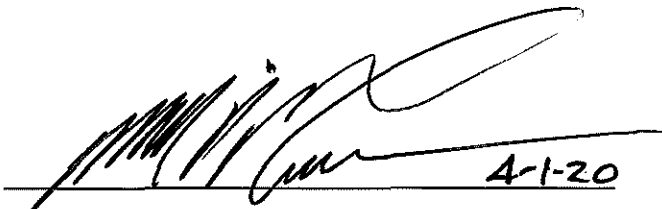
Bid TABULATION

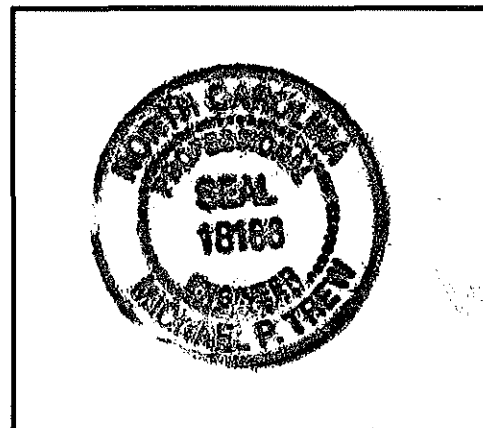
Guy Ford Road River Access Parking Lot Finish Work

Bid Date: March 31, 2020

Bidder's Name	Lump Sum Bid Items 1-15	Additional Item #1 Remove and replace unsuitable material Bid Cost per CY	Additional Item #2 BX-11 Geogrid (Installed) Bid Cost per SY
VPC	\$200,268.59	\$23.79	\$3.97
Moretz Paving	\$158,733.94	\$35	\$3
Tri County Paving	\$117,697.48	\$75	\$8
PADCO Excavating	\$140,856.96	\$35	\$3.50

I, Michael P. Trew, certify that this is an accurate tabulation of bids received today, Tuesday, March 31, 2020 at 2:00 pm.


 Michael P. Trew, PE



AGENDA ITEM 11:

MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

A. Watauga County Humane Society Request to Apply for Small Business Loan Under the Recently Enacted CARE Act

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

The Watauga Humane Society respectfully requests permission as required by the terms of their loan document to apply for an SBA Loan under the recently enacted CARE Act.

Per the provisions of the Act, specifically the Paycheck Protection Program, it is the Humane Society's understanding that 501(c)3 organizations are eligible to apply for a loan equal to 2 ½ times their monthly payroll. The proceeds from these loans will be forgiven if used to pay employees' salaries, organizations' utility costs and interest on indebtedness over a period of the next 8 weeks. It is their intent to use the loan proceeds for these purposes and we estimate this amount to be around \$50,000.

Authorization was required prior to the Board's April 7 meeting. Staff authorized the request with the understanding that should the Commissioners not support the request it would be withdrawn from consideration.

Board action is required to authorize the Humane Society to proceed forward with their request.

Watauga Humane Society

PO Box 1835
Boone, NC 28607
wataugahumane.org

March 31, 2020

Deron Geouque
Watauga County Manager
814 West King Street, Suite 205
Boone, NC 28607

REF: CARE Act SBA Loan for 501©3

Dear Deron:

The Watauga Humane Society respectfully requests permission as required by the terms of our loan document to apply for an SBA Loan under the recently enacted CARE Act.

Per the provisions of the Act, specifically the Paycheck Protection Program, it is our understanding that 501©3 organizations are eligible to apply for a loan equal to 2 ½ times their monthly payroll. The proceeds from these loans will be forgiven if used to pay employees' salaries, organizations' utility costs and interest on indebtedness over a period of the next 8 weeks. It is our intent to use the loan proceeds for these purposes and we estimate this amount to be around \$50,000.

In the essence of time, we also respectfully request to begin the application process pending the County decision. We understand that this approval may require a vote from the County Commissioners at the next scheduled meeting.

Sincerely,

Alice Roess
President
Board of Directors

AGENDA ITEM 11:

MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

B. Vehicle Purchase

MANAGER’S COMMENTS:

The Sheriff’s vehicle was recently totaled in February. The insurance paid \$12,947 for the total loss of the vehicle. The Sheriff’s office is now requesting to utilize the insurance payment along with excess funds in the vehicle capital outlay to purchase one (1) new 2020 Dodge Durango SUV from Ilderton Dodge for \$30,109.81, which includes tax and tags.

Board approval is requested to purchase one (1) new 2020 Dodge Durango SUV from Ilderton Dodge for \$30,109.81, which includes tax and tags.



WATAUGA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

184 HODGES GAP ROAD
BOONE, NORTH CAROLINA 28607
(828) 264-3761 • FAX (828) 263-5345

LEN D. HAGAMAN, JR.
SHERIFF

To: Deron Geouque- Watauga County Manager

From: Major Kelly Redmon

Ref: Vehicle Purchase for total loss vehicle

On February 24, 2020 a 2016 Ford Sedan was involved in a vehicle collision on River Street in Boone, NC. As a result of the collision, the vehicle was deemed a total loss by the party at fault's insurance company and Watauga County has been paid (pro-rated) for the loss of that vehicle in the amount of \$12,947.

We would like to utilize the insurance settlement amount along with surplus funds in the capital outlay vehicle line to purchase a 2020 Dodge Durango SUV from Ilderton Dodge for 29,227.00

There are funds available within the Sheriff's budget along with the insurance settlement to pay for this vehicle.

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AGENDA ITEM 11:

MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

C. Announcements

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

The Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute Building Dedication and Open House scheduled for Tuesday, April 7, 2020, at 5:30 P.M. has been cancelled.

The Watauga Compassionate Community Initiative 2020 Conference will be held on Saturday, May 16, 2020, from 8:00 A.M. to 3:15 P.M. at Watauga High School.

AGENDA ITEM 12:

PUBLIC COMMENT

AGENDA ITEM 13:

BREAK

AGENDA ITEM 14:

CLOSED SESSION

Attorney/Client Matters – G. S. 143-318.11(a)(3)