

AGENDA ITEM 2:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

June 7, 2022, Regular Meeting

June 7, 2022, Closed Session

MINUTES

**WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2022**

The Watauga County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting, as scheduled, on Tuesday, June 7, 2022, at 5:30 P.M. in the Commissioners' Board Room located in the Watauga County Administration Building, Boone, North Carolina.

Chairman Welch called the meeting to order at 5:31 P.M. The following were present:

PRESENT: John Welch, Chairman
 Billy Kennedy, Vice-Chairman
 Carrington Peralion, Commissioner
 Larry Turnbow, Commissioner
 Charlie Wallin, Commissioner
 Anthony di Santi, County Attorney
 Deron Geouque, County Manager
 Anita J. Fogle, Clerk to the Board

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Welch called for additions and/or corrections to the May 24, 2022, regular meeting and closed session minutes.

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Turnbow, moved to approve the May 24, 2022, regular meeting minutes as presented.

VOTE: Aye-5
 Nay-0

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Turnbow, moved to approve the May 24, 2022, closed session minutes as presented.

VOTE: Aye-5
 Nay-0

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Welch called for additions and/or corrections to the June 7, 2022, agenda.

Commissioner Peralion, seconded by Vice-Chairman Kennedy, moved to approve the June 7, 2022, agenda as presented.

VOTE: Aye-5
 Nay-0

PROPOSED RESOLUTION FOR WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT GRANT FOR MIDDLE FORK GREENWAY

Mr. Joe Furman, Planning and Inspections/EDC Director, presented a proposed resolution for a Water Resource Grant for Boone Gorge Park which was a part of the Middle Fork Greenway. The resolution would obligate the County to assume responsibility and all conditions as specified by the grant.

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Turnbow, moved to adopt the resolution as presented.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

APPOINTMENT OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO THE WATAUGA COMMUNITY HOUSING TRUST (WCHT)

Mr. Joe Furman, Planning and Inspections/EDC Director, presented the following proposed members for consideration of appointment to the Board of Directors of the Watauga Community Housing Trust (WCHT):

- Rob Howard, President of Howard Building Science, who was a builder/developer of sustainable affordable housing and spent most of his construction career with Habitat for Humanity. He was also a Building Science Lecturer at Appalachian State University.
- Lynn Coulthard who was associated with The Affordables (affordable housing group) and was also associated with St Mary's of the Hills in Blowing Rock.
- Meredith Maiken who was a Western North Carolina native and Senior at Appalachian State studying Sustainable Development and Planning and interested in long-term solutions to the housing affordability crisis in the region.
- Ben Loomis, Grant Coordinator for the Hunger and Health Coalition, who was a local nonprofit worker and Deep Gap resident interested in building structural solutions to the affordable housing crisis alongside work to address food insecurity and other community issues.
- Joe Furman, Watauga County Planning & Inspections and Economic Development Director, who was one of the founding Board members of the currently inactive Watauga Community Housing Trust.

As discussed at the May 3, 2022, Board meeting, the task of the new Board would be to revise the WCHT bylaws regarding Board membership and the method of appointment. Mr. Furman requested the customary second reading for appointments be waived.

Commissioner Turnbow, seconded by Commissioner Wallin, moved to waive the second reading and appoint Rob Howard, Lynn Coulthard, Meredith Maiken, Ben Loomis, and Joe Furman as the Board of Directors of the Watauga Community Housing Trust.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

PROPOSED PROCLAMATION FOR ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

Ms. Betsy Richards, Ms. Stevie John, and Ms. Angie Boitnotte present a proposed proclamation declaring June 15, 2022, as “World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.” Ms. Boitnotte stated that broadened attention was brought to the issue throughout the month between Mother’s Day and Father’s Day and shared statistics on elder abuse. Ms. John read the proposed proclamation.

Commissioner Turnbow, seconded by Commissioner Peralion, moved to adopt the proclamation as presented.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

PROJECT ON AGING MATTERS

A. Proposed Final Revised Allocation of Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 Supplemental Nutrition Funding (HDC5)

Ms. Angie Boitnotte, Project on Aging Director, stated that the Board had approved the plan to allocate funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Funding (HDC5) in the amount of \$23,592 on July 20, 2021. The initial allocation required revisions due to actual spending levels. No matching funds were required and the funds had to be expended by September 30, 2022.

Ms. Boitnotte requested the following revisions:

Service	Unit Based Allocation	Non-Unit Allocation	Totals
Congregate Meals	\$1,796	\$7,000	\$8,796
Home Delivered Meals	\$1,796	\$13,000	\$14,796
Totals	\$3,592	\$20,000	\$23,592

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Wallin, moved to adopt the revised funding plan as presented by Ms. Boitnotte.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

B. Proposed Allocation of Projected FY 2023 Home & Community Care Block Grant (H&CCBG) Funds

Ms. Angie Boitnotte, Project on Aging Director, requested acceptance of the projected allocation of \$313,778 in Home and Community Care Block Grant (H&CCBG) funds for FY 2023. The required local match was \$34,865 and was present in the Project on Aging’s FY 2023 requested budget. The proposed allocations were as follows:

HCCBG Service	HCCBG Allocation	Match
In-Home Aide Level I	\$87,089	\$9,677
In-Home Aide Level II	\$74,670	\$8,297
Congregate Meals	\$40,000	\$4,444
Home Delivered Meals	\$106,019	\$11,780
Transportation	\$6,000	\$667

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Peralion, moved to accept the FY 2023 allocations for the Home & Community Care Block Grant (H&CCBG) Funds as presented by Ms. Boitnotte.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

ADOPTION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET ORDINANCE

County Manager Geouque presented the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Ordinance for adoption. Below were proposed changes since the proposed budget was presented:

Budget Change Summary		
General Fund		
Revenues	Expenditures	
	\$869	Children’s Playhouse
	\$(869)	General and Liability Insurance
	\$12,000	Contracted Services – Medical Director
	\$(12,000)	Retiree Health Insurance Expense
	\$ 0	Net change and Overall Budget Increase

Chairman Welch stated that the property tax rate was decreased in the proposed Ordinance from \$0.403 to \$0.318 per \$100 of valuation would give Watauga County the lowest tax rate in the State. The Chairman gave a brief review of the budget which was balanced with no appropriations from the Fund Balance.

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Turnbow, moved to adopt the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Ordinance as presented.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

A. Update on the Naming Application Request in Memory of Lawrence “Lan” O’Loughlin

County Manager stated that, at the May 24, 2022, meeting, Mr. Eric O’Loughlin, Ms. Jean Hord Roberts, and Ms. Ashley Ginn had presented a request to name the lap pool in the aquatic center at the Community Recreation Center (CRC) after Mr. Lawrence (“Lan”) O’Loughlin who was the Watauga High School Men’s and Women’s head swim coach from 1979 to 2003.

The County Manager stated that a public hearing was required to be scheduled to seek comments and input from County citizens. Once the public hearing was held the Board shall vote on the request. A unanimous vote of the Board was required for the naming application to be approved.

Brief discussion was held in regards to a date for the public hearing and a potential change for the second meeting in July due to a project deadline that had not yet been determined.

Due to the uncertainty of the date, Chairman Welch tabled scheduling a public hearing until the June 21, 2022, meeting, at which time the project deadline date would be known.

B. July Meeting Schedule

County Manager Geouque stated that historically, only one meeting was held in July due to all the work which had been done on the budget as well as the July 4th holiday. Also, historically, at the beginning of a new fiscal year there was limited business for the Board's consideration. The Manager recommended cancelling the first meeting in July and, at this time, holding the second meeting as currently scheduled for the third Tuesday on July 19.

At an earlier meeting, the July 19 meeting location was changed to the Community Room in the Community Recreation Center (CRC) in anticipation of the Board Room being used as a polling site for a second primary. According to Mr. Matt Snyder, Board of Elections Director, there would not be a second primary; therefore, staff recommended the July 19, 2022, regular meeting be held in the Commissioners' Board Room. A proposal to change the date of the second meeting may be made at the June 21, 2022, meeting due to a yet undetermined project deadline.

Vice-Chairman Kennedy, seconded by Commissioner Wallin, moved to cancel the first meeting in July and move the second meeting location back to the Commissioners' Board Room in the Administration Building.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

C. Announcements

County Manager Geouque announced the following:

- The North Carolina Association of County Commissioners' (NCACC) next Board of Directors meeting was scheduled in Watauga County on June 24-25, 2022. The NCACC invites the Chairman or Vice-Chairman and County Manager to speak at the beginning of the meeting on the 24th, to provide a brief welcome message to Watauga County. Vice-Chairman Kennedy stated that he would be in attendance to welcome the Association to the County as Chairman Welch had another commitment on that date.
- The NCACC also invites the Watauga County Board of Commissioners to be guests at the NCACC Board dinner which would be held at the Meadowbrook Inn on the evening of June 24th.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Carol Thompson requested and received clarification that the public hearing for the naming request would be scheduled at the June 21, 2022, meeting.

County Attorney di Santi quoted portions of the below G.S. 1a-1 Rule 11 and stated that he could not in good faith file a Petition for Discretionary Review on the County's behalf in the Appalachian Materials, LLC, Board of Adjustment appeal after Judge Gavenus approval of Appalachian Materials' permit.

Rule 11. Signing and verification of pleadings.

(a) Signing by Attorney. – Every pleading, motion, and other paper of a party represented by an attorney shall be signed by at least one attorney of record in his individual name, whose address shall be stated. A party who is not represented by an attorney shall sign his pleading, motion, or other paper and state his address. Except when otherwise specifically provided by rule or statute, pleadings need not be verified or accompanied by affidavit. The signature of an attorney or party constitutes a certificate by him that he has read the pleading, motion, or other paper; that to the best of his knowledge, information, and belief formed after reasonable inquiry it is well grounded in fact and is warranted by existing law or a good faith argument for the extension, modification, or reversal of existing law, and that it is not interposed for any improper purpose, such as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay or needless increase in the cost of litigation. If a pleading, motion, or other paper is not signed, it shall be stricken unless it is signed promptly after the omission is called to the attention of the pleader or movant. If a pleading, motion, or other paper is signed in violation of this rule, the court, upon motion or upon its own initiative, shall impose upon the person who signed it, a represented party, or both, an appropriate sanction, which may include an order to pay to the other party or parties the amount of the reasonable expenses incurred because of the filing of the pleading, motion, or other paper, including a reasonable attorney's fee.

(b) Verification of pleadings by a party. – In any case in which verification of a pleading shall be required by these rules or by statute, it shall state in substance that the contents of the pleading verified are true to the knowledge of the person making the verification, except as to those matters stated on information and belief, and as to those matters he believes them to be true. Such verification shall be by affidavit of the party, or if there are several parties united in interest and pleading together, by at least one of such parties acquainted with the facts and capable of making the affidavit. Such affidavit may be made by the agent or attorney of a party in the cases and in the manner provided in section (c) of this rule.

(c) Verification of pleadings by an agent or attorney. – Such verification may be made by the agent or attorney of a party for whom the pleading is filed, if the action or defense is founded upon a written instrument for the payment of money only and the instrument or a true copy thereof is in the possession of the agent or attorney, or if all the material allegations of the pleadings are within the personal knowledge of the agent or attorney. When the pleading is verified by such agent or attorney, he shall set forth in the affidavit:

(1) That the action or defense is founded upon a written instrument for the payment of money only and the instrument or a true copy thereof is in his possession, or

(2) a. That all the material allegations of the pleadings are true to his personal knowledge and b. The reasons why the affidavit is not made by the party.

(d) Verification by corporation or the State. – When a corporation is a party the verification may be made by any officer, or managing or local agent thereof upon whom summons might be served; and when the State or any officer thereof in its behalf is a party, the verification may be made by any person acquainted with the facts. (1967, c. 954, s. 1; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 1027, s. 55.)

CLOSED SESSION

At 6:03 P.M., Commissioner Wallin, seconded by Commissioner Pertalion, moved to enter Closed Session to discuss Attorney/Client Matters, per G. S. 143-318.11(a)(3).

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

Commissioner Wallin, seconded by Commissioner Pertalion, moved to resume the open meeting at 6:51 P.M.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

ADJOURN

Commissioner Wallin, seconded by Commissioner Pertalion, moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:51 P.M.

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

VOTE: Aye-5
Nay-0

John Welch, Chairman

ATTEST:
Anita J. Fogle, Clerk to the Board

AGENDA ITEM 3:

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 21, 2022, AGENDA

AGENDA ITEM 4:

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY UPDATE

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

Mr. Matt Vincent, TDA Chair, and Wright Tilley, TDA Director, will provide an update to the Board on TDA matters.

The report is for information only; therefore, no action is required at this time.

AGENDA ITEM 5:

DESTINATION BY DESIGN PROPOSALS

A. Imagine Watauga Action Plan

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

Mr. Eric Woolridge, Destination by Design, will discuss with the Board the Imagine Watauga Action Plan. The Imagine Watauga Action Plan will replace the Boone Area Outdoor Recreation Plan adopted in 2010.

Mr. Woolridge will be looking for guidance and direction from the Board.

To: Deron Geouque, Watauga County Manager
From: Eric Woolridge, President, Destination by Design Planning
Date: 06/15/2022
Re: Imagine Watauga Action Plan

The Watauga County Tourism Development Authority (WCTDA) and Boone Tourism Development Authority (BTDA) have retained Boone-based Destination by Design Planning to develop a new long-range tourism action plan to determine how best the TDAs can allocate their “tourism-related capital infrastructure” dollars.

The Imagine Watauga Action Plan will replace the WCTDA’s Boone Area Outdoor Recreation Plan, which was adopted in 2010 and called for the creation of a variety of new projects, including Rocky Knob Mountain Bike Park, the development of river accesses, and expanded greenways and trails, such as the Middle Fork Greenway.

For your review, attached is a project Fact Sheet and the complete scope of work for conducting the Imagine Watauga planning process. This project will rely heavily on public engagement, including a community-wide survey and series of focus groups, which are described in the Fact Sheet.

In addition, we intend to engage various communities throughout Watauga County. One specific meeting we are preparing for will be among Valle Crucis stakeholders. After talking with the County Manager, it would be helpful if the Commissioners could provide our team with direction on plans for the existing Valle Crucis school, which will soon be replaced. We anticipate that the community will want to provide ideas for the future of this property and surrounding locally held public land. It would be very beneficial to have guidelines for our discussion with Valle Crucis stakeholders. Our team sees this planning work as an opportunity to develop consensus on the future use of this property, and with your leadership, we can appropriately frame this dialogue.

Another significant opportunity identified early in this planning effort includes the future of the Armory property, which is jointly owned by the County and Town. Again, we see this planning exercise as an opportunity to develop consensus regarding the future of this site. We request that the Commissioners and Town Council each select three (3) representatives to serve on a project steering committee to help develop recommendations for this property (we make a similar recommendation to the Boone Town Council meeting on 6/22).

Our team looks forward to working with the Board of Commissioners and other stakeholders and leaders from throughout Watauga County. We anticipate that this final document will not only help guide local leaders on how best to invest tourism revenues, but will also effectively communicate our vision to state and federal grant agencies, thereby successfully leveraging and multiplying our local resources.

Tourism Master Plan

Boone TDA and Watauga County TDA

1: Direction Setting

1.1. *Direction Setting Meeting.* Facilitate a meeting among the Project Oversight Committee (POC) to establish a vision for planning and project success, providing clear expectations for the consultant team. Provide a draft project work schedule and timeline with key milestones for approval.

1.2. *Project Brand.* Develop a custom “internal” project brand to promote the Tourism Infrastructure Master Plan. Create a visual identity and messaging aimed at educating and energizing community leaders and citizens about this important work. Develop custom icons and a color palette to ensure consistency of print and digital materials throughout the planning process.

1.3. *Project Website and Fact Sheet.* Develop a compelling project website to disseminate information about the planning goals, planning process and how the public can get involved (ie. online survey and public forum). Develop a project Fact Sheet, including goals, process, and contact information, that can be sent to stakeholder email lists.

1.4. *Online Survey.* Develop an online community survey to obtain citizen ideas for plan direction. DbD expects to obtain 300-500 responses. The survey will be promoted via the promotional video.

1.5. *Project Promotional Video.* Conduct video interviews among community stakeholders, in which community leaders communicate the need for undertaking this master planning effort and how citizens can get involved. Obtain outdoor recreation activity and drone footage from throughout the County to help tell the story. Incorporate the project brand and compelling graphics to produce a custom video that creates citizen interest. Advertise the video on Facebook with a call to action encouraging citizens to visit the project website and take a community survey. [Provide up to two \(2\) additional local government leader interviews and obtain additional footage of existing Town of Boone assets to incorporate within the project promotional video.](#)

2: Discovery, Analysis, & Public Engagement

2.1 *GIS Database Development.* Obtain all pertinent GIS data. In addition, obtain county and municipal updated parcel data, aerial photography, floodplain and other environmental data, existing and proposed transportation networks, public infrastructure, utilities, zoning, and census data. This information will be critical for identifying gaps and new connectivity opportunities.

2.2 *Trends, Demographics and Info-graphic Development.* Analyze changes in occupancy tax revenues over the last five years and the proliferation of Airbnb and other short-term lodging tools. Conduct demographic and economic research for the County and region. Our team will work with local government leaders and the POC to ensure all important demographic information is compiled. Develop compelling info-graphics that clearly communicate findings. [Conduct an analysis of Town of Boone occupancy taxes and provide projections through 2040.](#)

2.3 *Plan Review.* Thoroughly review all existing local and regional plans and highlight key planning implications. This review will include any strategic or long-term land use, recreation, or strategic plans developed by local, state, federal, or non-profit agencies. [Conduct a review Boone-specific plans,](#)

such as, but not limited to sustainability plans, bike/ped plans, comprehensive plans, and recreation plans and highlight key planning implications.

2.4 Survey Analysis. The consultant team will review results of the online survey to obtain a broader understanding of citizen needs and wants. Develop info-graphics that highlight key findings.

2.5 Focus Groups and Interviews. With direction from the POC, the consultant team will conduct a combination of focus group meetings and individual interviews with key stakeholders, such as community health leaders, EDC board, Chamber of Commerce, Realtors Association, School Superintendent, private tourism oriented businesses, and key nonprofit and community organizations, such as Valle Crucis Historical Association, Valle Crucis Park, Green Valley Park, National Park Service, Blue Ridge and New River Conservancies, and NC Division of Parks and Recreation. Attend a Boone Town Council meeting, provide a summary of the planning process, request the formation of a focus group, and conduct up to two (2) focus group meetings specific to the Town of Boone tourism-related infrastructure priorities.

2.6 Field Visit and Gap Analysis. The consultant team will explore (3-5 days) assets located throughout the county to assess the condition of existing assets, identify resident and visitor access barriers, and opportunities for new or improved infrastructure. The DbD planning team shall conduct up to two (2) additional days of field work and site analysis based on focus group direction.

3: Visioning and Theme Development

3.1 Plan Framework. Develop a plan framework that identifies gaps and opportunities for tourism infrastructure development, “village” development, and outdoor recreation. Identify specific opportunities that can attract or support new or additional recreation and tourism user groups. Identify activities and opportunities that further community development, revitalization, and sustainable access to public and private lands. Organize the framework according to key thematic areas, such as by recreation activity, land manager, or geographic area. The plan framework will establish a plan organization that is customized to meet the needs of Watauga County. Provide a plan framework that address Boone-specific opportunities and needs.

3.2 Project Oversight Committee (POC) and WCTDA Board Workshop. The consultant team will conduct a workshop with the POC, present the framework plan and the results of all other research. The DbD team will present draft “emerging themes” and facilitate a “deep dive” with the POC to refine the overall plan direction and develop a project vision and mission. Prepare a presentation and conduct a separate meeting with Boone TDA to unveil the Boone plan framework.

4: Draft Plan Development

With an extensive understanding of the WCTDA's goals and vision, the consultant team will begin the plan development process, which, at a minimum, will feature the key elements outlined below.

4.1 Civic Master Planning and Place-Making. Develop up to seven (7) supporting illustrative site master plan and photo-renderings for key project areas. These illustrative plans will provide an aspirational framework for future strategic investments. Key plan features may include, but are not limited to greenways and open spaces, blueways, civic areas & plazas, village core revitalization and outdoor recreation connectivity, road networks, gateways, and land use development opportunities. These conceptual master plans are a necessary part of any planning process and will prepare the WCTDA to advance to the engineering and construction phase more quickly. Provide up to five (5)

custom schematics, renderings, and/or site plans related to Boone tourism infrastructure opportunities.

4.2 POC & WCTDA Board Presentation. Share the framework plan, civic master plans, answer questions, obtain critical feedback, and identify necessary draft plan changes. Ensure that stakeholders are comfortable with draft plans prior to hosting the public forum. [Include Town of Boone within this single presentation.](#)

4.3 Public Forum/ Tourism Summit. The consultant team will host a “drop-in” public meeting and feature draft plans, goals, policies, and illustrative master plans. The final meeting format will be determined by the POC and consultant team. Provide an opportunity for citizen feedback, and incorporate public comments and recommendations within final plan.

5: Final Plan Development

5.1 Develop Final Master Plan. The master plan document (approx. 150 pages) will be highly graphic and begin with an outline of project goals, the overall planning process, and public engagement methods and findings. Clearly organize all recommendations and illustrations. The implementation chapter will include a matrix with all recommendations, timeframe, and identify the project implementation partners. Outline priority needs and phasing, including short-term (<5 years) and long-term (>5 years) planning goals. [Create an additional chapter section that focuses on Town of Boone Opportunities.](#)

5.2 Grant Opportunities. Provide a matrix identifying key grant opportunities available to implement project recommendations. Outline grant funding amounts, matching requirements, and annual grant deadlines.

5.3 Final Presentation and Adoption. DbD will make a final presentation of the plan and assist WCTDA staff with adoption and/or any other presentations.

AGENDA ITEM 5:

DESTINATION BY DESIGN PROPOSALS

B. Howard Knob Park Improvements

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

Mr. Woolridge will update the Board on the Howard Knob Park and request approval to implement improvements.

Staff seeks direction from the Board.

To: Deron Geouque, Watauga County Manager
From: Eric Woolridge, President, Destination by Design Planning
Date: 06/15/2022
Re: Howard Knob Park Improvements

In 2018 the Watauga County Tourism Development Authority (WCTDA) developed a master plan for Howard Knob Park. The WCTDA would like to implement some elements of this plan within the next 12 months, including new ADA parking and access, an improved overlook area, and other general aesthetic improvements.

These improvements are not intended to significantly change how the park is used, but to merely upgrade the existing resource.

At the meeting we'll present a basic map that illustrates the proposed improvements. With Commissioner approval, the WCTDA is prepared to move forward with developing construction documents and executing this work.

Tourism Master Plan

Boone TDA and Watauga County TDA

1: Direction Setting

1.1. *Direction Setting Meeting.* Facilitate a meeting among the Project Oversight Committee (POC) to establish a vision for planning and project success, providing clear expectations for the consultant team. Provide a draft project work schedule and timeline with key milestones for approval.

1.2. *Project Brand.* Develop a custom “internal” project brand to promote the Tourism Infrastructure Master Plan. Create a visual identity and messaging aimed at educating and energizing community leaders and citizens about this important work. Develop custom icons and a color palette to ensure consistency of print and digital materials throughout the planning process.

1.3. *Project Website and Fact Sheet.* Develop a compelling project website to disseminate information about the planning goals, planning process and how the public can get involved (ie. online survey and public forum). Develop a project Fact Sheet, including goals, process, and contact information, that can be sent to stakeholder email lists.

1.4. *Online Survey.* Develop an online community survey to obtain citizen ideas for plan direction. DbD expects to obtain 300-500 responses. The survey will be promoted via the promotional video.

1.5. *Project Promotional Video.* Conduct video interviews among community stakeholders, in which community leaders communicate the need for undertaking this master planning effort and how citizens can get involved. Obtain outdoor recreation activity and drone footage from throughout the County to help tell the story. Incorporate the project brand and compelling graphics to produce a custom video that creates citizen interest. Advertise the video on Facebook with a call to action encouraging citizens to visit the project website and take a community survey. [Provide up to two \(2\) additional local government leader interviews and obtain additional footage of existing Town of Boone assets to incorporate within the project promotional video.](#)

2: Discovery, Analysis, & Public Engagement

2.1 *GIS Database Development.* Obtain all pertinent GIS data. In addition, obtain county and municipal updated parcel data, aerial photography, floodplain and other environmental data, existing and proposed transportation networks, public infrastructure, utilities, zoning, and census data. This information will be critical for identifying gaps and new connectivity opportunities.

2.2 *Trends, Demographics and Info-graphic Development.* Analyze changes in occupancy tax revenues over the last five years and the proliferation of Airbnb and other short-term lodging tools. Conduct demographic and economic research for the County and region. Our team will work with local government leaders and the POC to ensure all important demographic information is compiled. Develop compelling info-graphics that clearly communicate findings. [Conduct an analysis of Town of Boone occupancy taxes and provide projections through 2040.](#)

2.3 *Plan Review.* Thoroughly review all existing local and regional plans and highlight key planning implications. This review will include any strategic or long-term land use, recreation, or strategic plans developed by local, state, federal, or non-profit agencies. [Conduct a review Boone-specific plans,](#)

such as, but not limited to sustainability plans, bike/ped plans, comprehensive plans, and recreation plans and highlight key planning implications.

2.4 Survey Analysis. The consultant team will review results of the online survey to obtain a broader understanding of citizen needs and wants. Develop info-graphics that highlight key findings.

2.5 Focus Groups and Interviews. With direction from the POC, the consultant team will conduct a combination of focus group meetings and individual interviews with key stakeholders, such as community health leaders, EDC board, Chamber of Commerce, Realtors Association, School Superintendent, private tourism oriented businesses, and key nonprofit and community organizations, such as Valle Crucis Historical Association, Valle Crucis Park, Green Valley Park, National Park Service, Blue Ridge and New River Conservancies, and NC Division of Parks and Recreation. Attend a Boone Town Council meeting, provide a summary of the planning process, request the formation of a focus group, and conduct up to two (2) focus group meetings specific to the Town of Boone tourism-related infrastructure priorities.

2.6 Field Visit and Gap Analysis. The consultant team will explore (3-5 days) assets located throughout the county to assess the condition of existing assets, identify resident and visitor access barriers, and opportunities for new or improved infrastructure. The DbD planning team shall conduct up to two (2) additional days of field work and site analysis based on focus group direction.

3: Visioning and Theme Development

3.1 Plan Framework. Develop a plan framework that identifies gaps and opportunities for tourism infrastructure development, “village” development, and outdoor recreation. Identify specific opportunities that can attract or support new or additional recreation and tourism user groups. Identify activities and opportunities that further community development, revitalization, and sustainable access to public and private lands. Organize the framework according to key thematic areas, such as by recreation activity, land manager, or geographic area. The plan framework will establish a plan organization that is customized to meet the needs of Watauga County. Provide a plan framework that address Boone-specific opportunities and needs.

3.2 Project Oversight Committee (POC) and WCTDA Board Workshop. The consultant team will conduct a workshop with the POC, present the framework plan and the results of all other research. The DbD team will present draft “emerging themes” and facilitate a “deep dive” with the POC to refine the overall plan direction and develop a project vision and mission. Prepare a presentation and conduct a separate meeting with Boone TDA to unveil the Boone plan framework.

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4.3 Public Forum/ Tourism Summit. The consultant team will host a “drop-in” public meeting and feature draft plans, goals, policies, and illustrative master plans. The final meeting format will be determined by the POC and consultant team. Provide an opportunity for citizen feedback, and incorporate public comments and recommendations within final plan.

5: Final Plan Development

5.1 Develop Final Master Plan. The master plan document (approx. 150 pages) will be highly graphic and begin with an outline of project goals, the overall planning process, and public engagement methods and findings. Clearly organize all recommendations and illustrations. The implementation chapter will include a matrix with all recommendations, timeframe, and identify the project implementation partners. Outline priority needs and phasing, including short-term (<5 years) and long-term (>5 years) planning goals. [Create an additional chapter section that focuses on Town of Boone Opportunities.](#)

5.2 Grant Opportunities. Provide a matrix identifying key grant opportunities available to implement project recommendations. Outline grant funding amounts, matching requirements, and annual grant deadlines.

5.3 Final Presentation and Adoption. DbD will make a final presentation of the plan and assist WCTDA staff with adoption and/or any other presentations.

AGENDA ITEM 6:

PROPOSED W.A.M.Y. SUPPORT LETTER

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

W.A.M.Y Community Action, Inc. is applying for a Housing Preservation grant to allow for repairs and rehabilitation on very low-income family homes. They have successfully utilized this grant for the last two years and would like to continue to provide this service to low-income Watauga County citizens. Currently, they use the Housing Preservation grant to do repair work on homes, such as roofs, plumbing and electrical repairs, or mold removal.

As part of the grant application, W.A.M.Y must demonstrate the support of county officials for this type of work and that this is not a duplication of another program operated by the County. A letter is attached that requires the County Commission Chair's signature.

Board action is required to support W.A.M.Y's grant application and approved the attached letter.



County of Watauga

Administration Building, Suite 205 • 814 West King Street • Boone, North Carolina 28607

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

John Welch, Chairman
Billy Kennedy, Vice-Chairman
Carrington Peralion
Larry Turnbow
Charlie Wallin

Telephone 828-265-8000
TDD 1-800-735-2962
Voice 1-800-735-8262

COUNTY MANAGER
Deron T. Geouque

COUNTY ATTORNEY
Anthony di Santi

June 21, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

The Commissioners of Watauga County are very interested in addressing the housing issues faced by our low and very-low income citizens. We realize that there are many households living in substandard housing and unsafe conditions throughout our county. While the need is great; unfortunately, our resources are limited.

WAMY Community Action, Inc. has been providing housing and housing-related programs in our county for 58 years. In fact, over the years, their various housing programs have assisted hundreds of Watauga County residents by making their homes safer and more energy efficient.

To that end, the Commissioners of Watauga County fully support WAMY Community Action, Inc. in their application for Housing Preservation Grant funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Division.

Sincerely,

John Welch, Chairman
Watauga County Board of Commissioners

WAMY Community Action, Inc.
2022 Application for Housing Preservation Grant Funds

1. A statement of activities proposed by the applicant for its HPG program as appropriate to the type of assistance the applicant is proposing, including:
 - i.) A complete discussion of the type of and conditions for financial assistance for housing preservation, including whether the request for assistance is for a homeowner assistance program, a rental property assistance program, or a co-op assistance program;

WAMY Community Action, Inc. will use the Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) funds to provide housing repairs, health and safety improvements, and energy efficiency upgrades to 15 homes for low and very-low income residents of Watauga, Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties in rural, Western NC. The proposed HPG program will be a homeowner assistance program.

Type of Assistance – Grants will be made available to eligible homeowners to cover the cost of the repairs.

Conditions for Assistance – Homes will be identified through referrals from community partners and from the pool of applicants to WAMY’s housing department. All applicants will be required to complete the housing assistance application form. Based on information contained in that application, and the condition of the home upon an initial audit, homes will be determined to be suitable for HPG assistance, another housing program, or deferred. It is our intention to defer as few homes as possible by utilizing HPG funds to make repairs such as roof leaks, and plumbing and electrical issues, so that we can follow-up with weatherization and heating repairs or replacements. There are also many homes that require more energy efficiency upgrades than our weatherization program can financially cover. In the past, we have had to waitlist these families until we could afford to weatherize their homes, which may never come. With HPG funding, we could share the cost between the two programs, and get these families the services they so desperately need and deserve. This would allow us to truly serve those most in need.

Grant Activities – HPG program funds will be used for the cost of repair/rehabilitation on low and very low-income family homes. WAMY operates many housing programs in all four counties, in addition to the weatherization assistance program. In 2019, we formed Community Housing Coalitions in Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey Counties. These Coalitions are made up of state programs, local agencies, faith organizations and volunteer groups that work on homes. They work together to share the projects and the cost so that more can be accomplished. We plan to coordinate these programs so that the funding can be used most efficiently, and more families can receive assistance. An example of how this might work could look like this: A low-income family has a home that is a large old farmhouse. It needs a roof repair, has a plumbing issue and needs a ramp. Weatherization cannot do any of these repairs. HPG moves in and fixes the roof and at a cost of \$1,500. WAMY uses the Urgent Repair program to fix the plumbing issue and then uses \$7,100 in weatherization funds to insulate the home, air seal all around the home and put down a moisture barrier. Independent Living (a program of Vocational Rehabilitation) installs a ramp. So, for an HPG investment of \$1,500, that family was able to receive more than \$10,000 in services.

- ii.) The process for selecting recipients for HPG assistance, determining housing preservation needs of the dwelling, performing the necessary work, and monitoring/inspecting work performed;

Recipient Selection – Those selected for HPG assistance will have a housing application on file with the agency. Only those that are low or very low-income, as defined by less than 50% or 80% of the area median income for each county will be considered for HPG assistance. Applicants must be the owner of the dwelling and the land. Each applicant will be required to submit evidence of income and ownership. WAMY Community Action will follow and implement the guidelines for fair housing in serving and selecting HPG program recipients.

Determining Housing Preservation Needs – All eligible applicant homes will be evaluated by our housing staff to determine structural, energy efficiency and health and safety needs. A basic audit of the home will be completed to outline the repairs needed in priority order and to determine the cost/benefit for each. For homes that are considered

for weatherization, the assessment includes a safety and efficiency test on the heating system and water heater, a measurement of heat loss calculations, a check of insulation levels in the attic and walls and a blower door test to measure the air leakage of the home. This initial audit is a critical part of our program and allows us to prioritize the services and grants that we use to assist the families. For those that need health and safety or accessibility repairs, HPG will be used first. Others may simply need weatherization, and then heating and air repair and/or replacement, etc.

Performing the Necessary Work – The rehabilitation/repair work will be performed by agency approved subcontractors. When a home is identified for HPG, a solicitation for bids will be created and released. This solicitation will be sent to contractors that are on an agency list of approved contractors and may also be sent to outside contractors, depending upon the type of work needed. From that solicitation, WAMY will choose the most qualified and most economical subcontractor(s) for the work. Other factors may also be considered, such as the date that the project can be completed. A work order will be prepared by housing staff that will detail the work to be completed, including cost estimates for each item. Housing staff will review the scope of work with the applicant and finalize any work specification prior to assigning a subcontractor to begin the work. WAMY housing staff will walk through the dwelling with the subcontractor to go over the scope of work to ensure complete understanding of the work to be performed. All work will be in accordance with local, state and national building code requirements. Rehabilitation and repair of homes may include roof repair, window replacement, handicapped accessibility, and other health and safety measures. If HPG funds are to be used for energy efficiency work or the installation of heating systems, WAMY will forego the bid process and use our state approved subcontractors who have already been vetted and approved by the Department of Energy and our Board of Directors to do this work.

Monitoring and Inspection – Upon completion of the rehabilitation/repair, WAMY will contract with a disinterested third party to conduct a final inspection to verify compliance with work specifications. If the work is to be followed up with weatherization, a new work order will be prepared outlining the weatherization work and the job will be assigned to a new subcontractor for those services. All weatherization jobs receive a final audit and are reviewed by a Quality Control Inspector prior to closure. Once all work is completed, the applicant will sign a final acceptance form to document the successful completion of the work. At that time, the applicant will also be given a customer satisfaction survey to gauge their satisfaction with the services they received. This will measure their satisfaction with the work and the service they received from staff and subcontractors as well.

- iii.) A description of the process for coordinating with other public and private organizations and programs that provide assistance in rehabilitation of historic properties in accordance with 7 CFR 1944.673.

Coordination with Public and Private Organizations – WAMY does not anticipate doing any repair or rehabilitation work on properties that are historic. WAMY will also abide by the requirements of the Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement with the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Prior to beginning any work on a home, the property will be checked to see if it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

WAMY's process for complying with Stipulation I, A-G of the Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement is as follows:

- 1) Determine whether the property is already registered or otherwise determined to be significant by referencing the SHPO GIS website at <http://gis.ncdcr.gov/hpoweb/>. If the property does not appear on HPOWEB;
- 2) Consider the age of the building. If the building is more than 45 years old, SHPO will be consulted prior to any rehabilitation or repair work beginning. If the building is more than 45 years old, and if it is of a type that SHPO has indicated may be eligible or if the building appears to be of historical or architectural significance, SHPO will be consulted.
- 3) If properties are designated as historical, consultation with SHPO will be done to ensure that any work performed on the dwelling is in compliance with SHPO requirements.

- iv.) The development standard(s) the applicant will use for the housing preservation work; and, if not the Rural Development development standards for existing dwellings, the evidence of its acceptance by the jurisdiction where the grant will be implemented;

Development Standards – WAMY will use the standards and building codes of Rural Development along with the standards set forth in the building codes adopted by each county.

- v.) The time schedule for completing the program;

Time Schedule – WAMY will complete the Housing Preservation Grant in a 12 month period.

- vi.) The staffing required to complete the program;

Staffing – The staff working on the Housing Preservation Grant will be the Housing and Energy Development Director and the Housing and Energy Development Coordinator. The Director has more than 33 years of experience as a general contractor and business owner. He is very knowledgeable about building codes and standards. The Director is responsible for conducting the initial and final audits of all housing projects. He is also responsible for writing all work orders and monitoring subcontractor performance. In addition, the Director is a certified Energy Auditor and Quality Control Inspector by the Building Performance Institute.

The Housing and Energy Development Coordinator has been handling the administration of the various housing grants for the past three years. She is responsible for managing the eligibility criteria and other regulations of all the grants, including HPG. She maintains the applicant documentation, assigns subcontractors, and works with the Finance Director to track grant expenditures.

WAMY's Quality Assurance Manager is responsible for internal monitoring of all grant operations. She will do a review of client files to ensure accuracy of eligibility and other documentation. The Quality Assurance Manager will also work with program staff to ensure program goals and objectives are being achieved and the budget to actual figures are on target.

The Executive Director has managed several housing programs, including two Housing Preservation Grants and a Single Family Rehabilitation Grant. The Executive Director will be responsible for providing oversight; gauging programmatic performance and ensuring all reports are completed and submitted in a timely manner.

WAMY's Finance Director will be responsible for completed all reports and submitting financial reimbursement requests. She has 10 years of experience as Finance Director, including the fiscal management of two Housing Preservation Grants.

See resumes attached.

- vii.) The estimated number of very low- and low-income minority and nonminority persons the grantee will assist with HPG funds; and, if a rental property or co-op assistance program, the number of units and the term of restrictive covenants on their use for very low- and low-income;

Numbers Assisted – WAMY proposes to serve 13 very low-income and 2 low-income families with Housing Preservation Grant funding. Based upon previous experience, we expect that at least one of these will be a minority.

Rental or Cooperative – WAMY does not propose to use HPG funds on rental or cooperative properties.

- viii.) The geographical area(s) to be served by the HPG program.

Geographical Area – WAMY will serve Watauga, Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties in rural, Western NC. None of these counties have been designated as metropolitan service areas. Each of these counties contains Rural Opportunity

Zones, with the largest in Watauga, Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties. In addition, Mitchell County is designated as a Tier 1 County and both Avery and Yancey are Tier 2.

- ix.) The annual estimated budget for the program period based on the financial needs to accomplish the objectives outlined in the proposal. The budget should include proposed direct and indirect administrative costs, such as personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contracts, and other cost categories, detailing those costs for which the grantee proposes to use the HPG grant separately from non-HPG resources, if any. The applicant budget should also include a schedule (with amounts) of how the applicant proposes to draw HPG grant funds, *i.e.*, monthly, quarterly, lump sum for program activities, etc.;

WAMY Community Action, Inc.
 HPG Annual Estimated Budget
 2022-2023

Line Item	Non-HPG	HPG
Salaries	\$32,000	\$10,000
Fringe	\$7,100	\$2,860
Travel	\$4,750	\$1,800
Rent	\$3,875	
Copies/Postage	\$1,262	\$870
Phone	\$1,200	
Indirect	\$13,294	\$4,372
TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE	\$63,481	\$19,902
Materials	\$114,773	\$67,148
Subcontractors	\$93,509	\$56,750
Inspectors		\$ 6,200
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	\$208,282	\$130,098
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	\$271,763	\$150,000

Schedule to Draw Down Funds – WAMY will draw down funds quarterly based upon actual expenditures.

- x.) A copy of an indirect cost proposal as required in 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by USDA through 2 CFR part 400, when the applicant has another source of federal funding in addition to the HPG program;

Accounting System – WAMY is using Grant Management Systems financial software. This system allows us to track our grants separately and prepare reports as needed. All purchases must be pre-approved by the Executive Director and both the Executive Director and the Finance Director check all invoices for accuracy. The Program Assistant works with the Finance Director to pay all accounts payable and complete payroll. The Finance Director is responsible for all financial reporting. A system of checks and balances is in place to ensure segregation of duties.

- xi.) The method of evaluation to be used by the applicant to determine the effectiveness of its program which encompasses the requirements for quarterly reports to Rural Development in accordance with § 1944.683(b) of this subpart and the monitoring plan for rental properties and co-ops (when applicable) according to § 1944.689 of this subpart;

Method of Evaluation - The Housing Development Coordinator will monitor progress on each dwelling to ensure quality workmanship and adherence to the work plan. Effectiveness of the program will be based upon the affordability and health and safety of each applicant dwelling. In addition, WAMY will evaluate our program effectiveness through a

comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives set forth in the pre-application (number of very low-income households assisted), as well as the percentage of HPG funds invested to total funds.

WAMY's Quality Assurance Manager will conduct internal monitoring of a sampling of applicant files at least annually to ensure eligibility documentation is in place and appropriate procedures are being followed. The Executive Director, Finance Director, Quality Assurance Manager, and program staff meet bi-monthly to do a review on program goals versus actual performance and to discuss any adjustments that may need to be made. In addition, the Planning and Evaluation Committee of WAMY's Board of Directors will review the program's progress throughout the year, as well as customer satisfaction surveys to ensure that applicants are pleased with the work and the services they are receiving.

Quarterly Reports - WAMY will adhere to the quarterly reporting requirement of Rural Development. HPG funds will not be used on rental properties or co-ops. Quarterly reports will be completed by the Housing Development Coordinator, the Finance Director and reviewed by the Executive Director.

- xii.) The source and estimated amount of other financial resources to be obtained and used by the applicant for both HPG activities and housing development and/or supporting activities;

Other Financial Resources – WAMY plans to use HPG funds in conjunction with many other sources to increase the efficiency and impact of our housing programs. Currently, we are using Housing Preservation in conjunction with our federal Weatherization and Heating and Air Replacement and Repair program. This has enabled us to greatly reduce the number of homes we have had to defer due to budgetary constraints or repair needs of the home. We have continued to search out new sources of funding and now have other resources to bring to the table. WAMY has funding from the NC Housing Finance agency that can be used to do emergency repairs to homes. We also have created a Community Housing Coalition in Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey Counties to bring all stakeholders together to share the workload and cost of low-income home repairs. We also have some unrestricted funds from local sources to use when federal funds are not available. All these sources together are allowing us to make a significant impact on the housing issues in our area. The Housing Preservation Grant is a driving force in this effort. In total, we hope to invest more than \$575,000 in the housing market in our four-county area over the next year.

- xiii.) The use of program income, if any, and the tracking system used for monitoring same;

Program Income – WAMY will not incur any program income through the HPG.

- xiv.) The applicant's plan for disposition of any security instruments held by them as a result of its HPG activities in the event of its loss of legal status;

Disposition Plan – WAMY plans to offer HPG funds as grants. No loans will be given.

- xv.) Any other information necessary to explain the proposed HPG program; and

Other – WAMY's Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment of 2022 indicated that substandard housing was an issue in all four of our counties. In fact, housing was the #1 need in all four counties. As a community action agency, we were designed to respond to the needs of our community, so we take this need very seriously. To that end, we have pulled together several small grants and local resources to create a strong housing department to address this need. The Housing Preservation Grant is an important part of our plan of action. By using HPG to do some of the repairs/rehabilitation work, we can then use our other resources to make the home more energy efficient and healthier for the family. With limited resources, it is increasingly important to maximize every dollar. By using these funds collectively, we are giving more people more services, and doing it more efficiently.

- xvi.) The outreach efforts outlined in § 1944.671(b) of this subpart.

Outreach - Since housing repairs are such a need in our area, there is rarely a need for outreach; however, in an effort to reach a diverse population and to ensure equal access, WAMY staff regularly speaks with area civic organizations, senior

citizen centers, and other human service organizations to explain the program(s) and to encourage referrals. Presentations are made quarterly at inter-agency meetings in all four counties. Ads are regularly placed in community newspapers, radios and online spots such as raysweather.com. The agency also participates in various expos, fairs and festivals across the region to promote our programs and activities. Community leaders are sought out in minority neighborhoods and asked to assist with recruitment efforts. All publications will include the statement “WAMY Community Action, Inc. is an equal opportunity program. Discrimination is prohibited by Federal Law.” WAMY will maintain a file outlining all our outreach activities and including copies of any advertising or printed materials.

2. Complete information about the applicant’s experience and capacity to carry out the objectives of the proposed HPG program.

Experience and Capacity - WAMY Community Action, Inc. has been providing housing services to the low-income of Watauga, Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties for 58 years. The agency has recent experience with Weatherization, including a multi-million dollar American Recovery Act grant, Single Family Rehabilitation, Urgent Repair and Housing Preservation Grants.

Our Housing and Energy Development Director has owned and operated a successful building company and has more than 33 years of experience as a general contractor. The Executive Director of the agency has successfully managed all of the housing grants for the past 10 years and has 30 years of experience with the agency.

We recently completed two grants through the North Carolina Community Action Association where we were recognized as leaders in serving low-income families with repair work and air quality improvements. As mentioned earlier, we recently formed Community Housing Coalitions in three of our Counties, and in 2 years, we have raised more than \$518,000 to fund the Coalitions.

Even during COVID-19, our service continued to the extent possible. We wore full protective gear, met with clients outside and did projects that could be completed without going inside the home. WAMY met all of our goals and continued to serve low-income families by adding health & safety kits to our services. These kits were delivered to the families that we served and included masks, hand sanitizer, cleaning wipes and information about COVID-19 safety.

3. A brief narrative statement which includes information about the area to be served and the need for improved housing (including both percentage and actual number of both low-income and low-income minority households and substandard housing), the need for the type of housing preservation assistance being proposed, the anticipated use of housing preservation resources for historic properties, the method of evaluation to be used by the applicant in determining the effectiveness of its efforts (according to paragraph (b)(1)(xii) of this section).

Information About Service Area - WAMY plans to offer HPG services in Watauga, Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties in Rural Western NC. These counties are very rural, with Watauga having the largest population due to Appalachian State University.

Data	Avery	Mitchell	Watauga	Yancey
Home Ownership	75%	78%	60% *percentage skewed due to college population	73%
Housing > 40 years old	61%	64%	60%	67%
Substandard Housing	11%	14%	26%	14%
White below poverty	14%	12.4%	24.2%	16.2%
African American below poverty	40.4%	100%	45.2%	6.6%
American Indian below poverty	32.4%	52.4%	30.9%	27.3%
Asian below poverty	23.7%	52.6%	37.1%	24%

Hispanic below poverty	34.9%	31.6%	6.7%	27.3%
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*Statistics provided by NC Department of Commerce, 2019 County Health Rankings and the U.S. Census Bureau.

Need for HPG Services – Housing was ranked as the #3 need in all four counties in WAMY’s 2019 Comprehensive Community Needs Survey. Not only was affordability and availability an issue, quality of housing was determined to be a significant barrier to the quality of life of low-income families. For those living on limited incomes, maintenance and repair of their homes is often the first thing to be neglected in favor of other pressing financial needs, like utility bills, food costs, or medical needs. Over time, these maintenance issues progress and turn into expensive and more threatening repair needs – things a low-income family can never afford to fix. From the chart above, you will see that most of the housing in our area is over 40 years old. Old houses often come with little to no insulation, old plumbing, leaky roofs and other structural issues. Not only are the houses getting older, so are the applicants to our programs and the citizens in our counties. WAMY’s service area is aging at a rate faster than the state average. That means more and more of our applicants are in need of accessibility improvements to their homes. They need doors widened, ramps built and new appliances. These are all things that our federal weatherization grant is not equipped to provide.

Having this Housing Preservation Grant would allow WAMY to help families in ways that we cannot with our other funding. This past two years, we have been able to assist 28 homes that we would have had to defer or put on a waitlist without the HPG funding. We have been able to repair roofs, install heating systems, and weatherize homes that were too costly for our limited funds and much more.

Measuring the need for HPG services solely on the poverty rate in our four counties would be misleading. It is true that our poverty rates are low, with the exception of Watauga County. However, if you look at the median income compared to the living wage, you will see that most people fall into the category of the working poor. Many work two or three jobs just to make ends meet. The cost of living compared to the average wages in our area is extreme. For example, a single person in Avery County would need to earn \$19,100 per year to be self-sufficient (based on the self-sufficiency standard calculator by United Way NC). The average single applicant to our housing programs has an income of \$12,817.

HPG for Historic Properties – WAMY does not anticipate doing housing preservation work on historic properties; however, if a property is identified as historic, staff will work with the State Historic Preservation Office to ensure that all work is in compliance with their requirements.

Method of Evaluation – WAMY will evaluate the success of our program by the number of homes that we are able to rehabilitate or repair and by the satisfaction of the applicants. WAMY will also monitor the funding used to ensure that all applicable resources are being used to ensure that each applicant is getting the maximum amount of services. All of the work performed through the HPG will be inspected by a disinterested third party to ensure the work is up to appropriate standards.

4. A statement containing the component for alleviating overcrowding as defined by §1944.679 of this subpart.

Overcrowding - Funds from the HPG program will be made available to alleviate overcrowding by making additions to households that meet the definition of overcrowded. The most commonly used measure is one person per room in the household. WAMY will utilize the U.S. Census definition of a “room” for the purpose of determining occupancy.

5. A list of other activities the applicant is engaged in and expects to continue, a statement as to other funding, and whether it will have sufficient funds to assure continued operation of the other activities for at least the period of the HPG grant agreement.

AGENDA ITEM 7:

TAX MATTERS

A. Monthly Collections Report

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

Mr. Larry Warren, Tax Administrator, will present the Monthly Collections Report and be available for questions and discussion.

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


Monthly Collections Report

Watauga County

Bank deposits of the following amounts have been made and credited to the account of Watauga County. The reported totals do not include small shortages and overages reported to the Watauga County Finance Officer

Monthly Report May 2022

	<u>Current Month</u> <u>Collections</u>	<u>Current Month</u> <u>Percentage</u>	<u>Current FY</u> <u>Collections</u>	<u>Current FY</u> <u>Percentage</u>	<u>Previous FY</u> <u>Percentage</u>
<u>General County</u>					
Taxes 2021	92,153.70		36,472,751.71	98.53%	98.73%
Prior Year Taxes	38,274.06		371,110.78		
Solid Waste User Fees	10,268.06		2,604,116.41	97.45%	97.68%
Green Box Fees	110.53		522.39	NA	NA
Total County Funds	\$140,806.35		\$39,448,501.29		
<u>Fire Districts</u>					
Foscoe Fire	969.79		472,522.04	99.04%	98.93%
Boone Fire	1,649.21		896,398.21	98.46%	98.67%
Fall Creek Service Dist.	7.98		9,646.19	98.70%	98.29%
Beaver Dam Fire	222.55		99,714.58	94.53%	97.33%
Stewart Simmons Fire	267.95		254,791.85	98.66%	98.73%
Zionville Fire	513.30		113,147.80	96.88%	97.00%
Cove Creek Fire	918.04		241,184.82	97.71%	97.93%
Shawneehaw Fire	58.54		105,482.83	98.28%	98.62%
Meat Camp Fire	2,132.44		209,799.98	97.20%	98.01%
Deep Gap Fire	1,451.46		186,305.03	97.88%	97.98%
Todd Fire	748.68		62,694.26	98.36%	98.84%
Blowing Rock Fire	1,541.19		498,722.49	98.55%	99.41%
M.C. Creston Fire	123.21		5,758.02	90.74%	91.24%
Foscoe Service District	129.10		74,633.37	98.71%	98.21%
Beech Mtn. Service Dist.	0.00		1,659.57	99.94%	99.94%
Cove Creek Service Dist.	0.00		324.15	100.00%	100.00%
Shawneehaw Service Dist	0.00		6,357.20	97.48%	95.27%
	\$10,725.46		\$3,229,496.20		
<u>Towns</u>					
Boone	17,608.89		6,689,448.74	99.20%	99.10%
Municipal Services	171.83		207,153.38	98.95%	98.48%
Boone MV Fee	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Blowing Rock	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Seven Devils	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Beech Mountain	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total Town Taxes	\$17,780.72		\$6,896,602.12		
Total Amount Collected	\$169,312.53		\$49,574,599.61		

 Tax Collections Director

 Tax Administrator

AGENDA ITEM 7:

TAX MATTERS

B. Refunds and Releases

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

Mr. Larry Warren will present the Refunds and Releases Reports. Board action is required to accept the Refunds and Releases Reports.

05/31/2022 14:55
Larry.Warren

WATAUGA COUNTY
RELEASES - 05/01/2022 TO 05/31/2022

P 1
tncrpt

OWNER NAME AND ADDRESS	CAT YEAR PROPERTY REASON	BILL	EFF DATE	JUR	REF NO	VALUE	CHARGE	AMOUNT
1591119 R & L MANAGEMENT PO BOX 769 BLOWING ROCK, NC 28605	PP 2019	3253	05/31/2022			0	G01	2.58
	591119999			F01			F01	.32
	TAX RELEASES NO LONGER IN WATAUGA COUNTY				8117			2.90
1591119 R & L MANAGEMENT PO BOX 769 BLOWING ROCK, NC 28605	PP 2020	1355	05/31/2022			0	G01	3.95
	591119999			F01			F01	.49
	TAX RELEASES NO LONGER IN WATAUGA COUNTY				8118		G01L F01L	.40 .05
								4.89
1591119 R & L MANAGEMENT PO BOX 769 BLOWING ROCK, NC 28605	PP 2021	3048	05/31/2022			0	G01	3.95
	591119999			F01			F01	.49
	TAX RELEASES NO LONGER IN WATAUGA COUNTY				8119		G01L F01L	.40 .05
								4.89
DETAIL SUMMARY	COUNT: 3	RELEASES - TOTAL				0		12.68

05/31/2022 14:55
Larry.Warren

WATAUGA COUNTY
RELEASES - 05/01/2022 TO 05/31/2022

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tncrpt

RELEASES - CHARGE SUMMARY FOR ALL CLERKS

YEAR	CAT	CHARGE	AMOUNT	
2019	PP	F01	FOSCOE FIRE PP	.32
2019	PP	G01	WATAUGA COUNTY PP	2.58
			2019 TOTAL	2.90
2020	PP	F01	FOSCOE FIRE PP	.49
2020	PP	F01L	FOSCOE FIRE LATE LIST	.05
2020	PP	G01	WATAUGA COUNTY PP	3.95
2020	PP	G01L	WATAUGA COUNTY LATE LIST	.40
			2020 TOTAL	4.89
2021	PP	F01	FOSCOE FIRE PP	.49
2021	PP	F01L	FOSCOE FIRE LATE LIST	.05
2021	PP	G01	WATAUGA COUNTY PP	3.95
2021	PP	G01L	WATAUGA COUNTY LATE LIST	.40
			2021 TOTAL	4.89
			SUMMARY TOTAL	12.68

05/31/2022 14:55
Larry.Warren

WATAUGA COUNTY
RELEASES - 05/01/2022 TO 05/31/2022

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tncrpt

RELEASES - JURISDICTION SUMMARY FOR ALL CLERKS

JUR	YEAR	CHARGE	AMOUNT
F01	2019	F01 FOSCOE FIRE PP	.32
F01	2019	G01 WATAUGA COUNTY PP	2.58
F01	2020	F01 FOSCOE FIRE PP	.49
F01	2020	F01L FOSCOE FIRE LATE LIST	.05
F01	2020	G01 WATAUGA COUNTY PP	3.95
F01	2020	G01L WATAUGA COUNTY LATE LIST	.40
F01	2021	F01 FOSCOE FIRE PP	.49
F01	2021	F01L FOSCOE FIRE LATE LIST	.05
F01	2021	G01 WATAUGA COUNTY PP	3.95
F01	2021	G01L WATAUGA COUNTY LATE LIST	.40
		F01 TOTAL	12.68
		SUMMARY TOTAL	12.68

AGENDA ITEM 7:

TAX MATTERS

C. Proposed Board of Equalization and Review Hearing Dates

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

Mr. Warren will present dates for the Board of Equalization and Review to hear appeal cases.

Board action is requested to accept the dates as presented.



WATAUGA COUNTY TAX ADMINISTRATION

*Courthouse, Suite 21 – 842 West King Street – Boone, NC 28607
(828) 265-8021 – FAX (828) 264-3230*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deron T. Geouque
CC: Anita Fogle, Clerk to the Board
FROM: Larry D. Warren
SUBJECT: 2022 Board of Equalization and Review Hearing Dates
DATE: June 14, 2022

I'd like to address the County Commissioners at the June 21st meeting to discuss dates and times for the 2022 Board of E&R hearings. My recommendation is:

Monday July 11, 2022 – 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm
Monday July 25, 2022 – 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm
Tuesday July 26, 2022 – 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Wednesday July 27, 2022 – 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Thursday July 28, 2022 – 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Upon your approval of the dates and times, my office will begin scheduling appointments in 15 minute increments.

Thank you.

AGENDA ITEM 8:

PROPOSED COURTHOUSE COMPUTER SYSTEMS SOFTWARE LICENSE AND SUPPORT AGREEMENT

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

Ms. Amy Shook, Register of Deeds, will request Board approval of the software contract with Courthouse Computer Systems, current vendor. The contract is in the amount of \$36,225. Adequate funds have been budgeted to cover this expense.

Board action is required to approve the contract in the amount of \$36,225 with Courthouse Computer Systems for the Register of Deeds software.

AGENDA ITEM 9:

MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

A. Proposed Contractor Prequalification Policy

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

In preparation for the bidding of the new Valle Crucis Elementary School, staff is requesting the Board adopt the attached contractor prequalification policy. The policy will ensure the lowest responsive bidder is also financially and technically able to complete the project.

Board approval is requested to approve the contractor prequalification policy as presented.

AGENDA ITEM 9:

MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

B. Proposed Contract with Vincent Valuations, LLC

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

The 2022 revaluation is now complete and the County needs to prepare for the next revaluation that is scheduled for 2027. During the 2022 budget retreat, the Commissioners discussed the next revaluation for the County and the need to conduct a full measure and list. Included is a contract with Vincent Valuations, LLC to conduct the 2027 revaluation for \$38.50 per parcel. In addition, the contract includes the cost to provide new construction services at \$29.50 per parcel. The contract would be effective July 1, 2022. Adequate funds have been budgeted to cover the 2022-2023 expenses.

Board approval is required to approve the contract with Vincent Valuations, LLC for the 2027 revaluation and new construction review services.

AGENDA ITEM 9:

MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

C. July Meeting Schedule

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

The first meeting in July has been cancelled. Staff will know at the June 21, 2022 meeting if the July 19 meeting date needs to be changed or can proceed as scheduled.

AGENDA ITEM 9:

MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

D. Update on the Naming Application Request in Memory of Lawrence “Lan” O’Loughlin

MANAGER’S COMMENTS:

Mr. Eric O’Loughlin, Ms. Jean Hord Roberts, and Ms. Ashley Ginn presented a request to name the lap pool in the aquatic center after Lawrence (“Lan”) O’Loughlin at the last Board meeting. Mr. O’Loughlin was the Watauga High School Men and Women’s head swim coach from 1979 to 2003.

Should the Board wish to approve the request, a public hearing is required to be scheduled to seek comments and input from County citizens. Once the public hearing has been completed the Board shall vote on the request. A unanimous vote of the Board is required for the naming application to be approved.

Staff seeks direction from the Board.

AGENDA ITEM 9:

MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

E. Discussion of House Bill 193

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

Per Commissioner request, House Bill 193 has been placed on the agenda for discussion. The Board may wish to consult with the County Attorney before taking any formal action.

Staff seeks direction from the Board.

AGENDA ITEM 9:

MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

F. Announcements

MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

The North Carolina Association of County Commissioners' (NCACC) next Board of Directors meeting will be held in Watauga County on June 24-25, 2022. The NCACC invites the Chairman or Vice-Chairman and County Manager to speak at the beginning of the meeting on the 24th, to provide a brief welcome message to Watauga County.

The NCACC also invites the Watauga County Board of Commissioners to be guests at the NCACC Board dinner which will be held at the Meadowbrook Inn on the evening of June 24th.

The Beech Mountain Watauga Medics Ribbon Cutting will be held at the Beech Mountain Volunteer Fire Station # 2 located at 513 St. Andrew's Road, Beech Mountain, North Carolina, on Saturday, June 25, 2022, from 2:00 to 4:00 P.M.

AGENDA ITEM 10:

PUBLIC COMMENT

AGENDA ITEM 11:

BREAK

AGENDA ITEM 12:

CLOSED SESSION

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

AGENDA ITEM 13:

POSSIBLE ACTION AFTER CLOSED SESSION