

Highway Committee Meeting
9/8/2015, Mayor's Conference Room

APPROVED

Meeting was called to order by Commissioner Hill at 6:50 PM

Roll call: Commissioners Acuff, Dietz, Hill, Miller, Simerly, VonCannon and Ward were present.
Commissioner Carroll sat in for Commissioner Gobble due to illness.

Approval of minutes of previous session and agenda:

Commissioner VonCannon requested that Helen Hughes and Steve Bailey be added to the agenda under "new business". Commissioner Acuff requested to add Kenneth Nave under "new business" as well. Motion was made to approve the agenda as amended, and the minutes of the previous session was made by Commissioner Dietz and seconded by Commissioner Acuff. The motion passed by acclamation.

Agenda item 2: Commissioner Hill recognized Mrs. Debbie Burchett, who had written a letter to the entire commission regarding the Highway Department employees' pay. Mrs. Burchett shared with the committee her insight experiences as the wife of a Highway Department employee. She stated that they were thankful for the job with the county, but that commissioners may not realize what kind of job the employees have and how well they serve the county. Mrs. Burchett shared that it is painful to hear statements such as "they don't deserve a raise", and that these statements adversely affect morale among the staff. She went on to detail the sacrifices that are required of the Highway crew, who are on call 24/7, and spoke of their dedication to the job and the experience level of long-time employees which benefits us all. She spoke about the loss of experienced employees that results from higher paying similar positions in neighboring municipalities. She closed by thanking the committee for the jobs once again and for allowing her to speak. Commissioner Dietz commended her on the well-written letter and thanked her for coming to share with the committee. Commissioner Hill stated that having the citizens actively engage in the process by speaking up was a beautiful thing and that we need to advocate for our county employees. A member of the audience who had recently relocated from another state complimented the Highway Department on the job well done.

Agenda item 3:

Mr. Harry Windecker requested that the county adopt Laurel Highlands to the county road list. He stated that the 12 houses on the road represent over \$12,000 in taxes, and spoke about the hazardous conditions created during winter months due to no regular snow removal. He spoke about attempts to contact the residents and that getting responses from the P.O.A. was difficult. He gave a history of the subdivision detailing how the developer had promised in 2001 to provide a road that would meet county specs and that would be adopted to the road list. The developer paved a 20' wide roadway, but did not provide the full 2" of asphalt. Commissioner Hill circulated a letter from Planning Director Chris Schuettler with details from the last time Laurel Highlands was requested for addition to the road list (in 2002) detailing that estimates at the time of \$55,000 in improvements would be necessary before the road would qualify for adoption. There were more remarks from Mr. Windecker about the condition of the road, and the lack of cooperation from the neighboring property owners, and that no petition had been circulated at present. Assistant Highway Superintendent Burchette provided a list of road criteria for review. Chairman Hill presented photographs of pavement problems present throughout the length of the road. A second resident on Laurel Highlands arrived and made remarks about the conditions. Commissioner Ward reiterated the question as to whether the residents would be willing to bring the road up to standard, and Mr. Windecker indicated this was probably not going to happen. Commissioner Hill read the criteria specified by the County Attorney for road adoption. Commissioner VonCannon pointed out that the road should have been constructed to county specs when it was built. The residents stated that they had paid the developer based on assurances that the road would be adopted. Commissioner Hill stated that the committee could not become involved in civil matters and advised him that the committee would be open to consider adoption of the road once all the adoption criteria had been met. As the criteria for adoption had not been met, no action was taken by the committee.

Agenda item 4:

Mr. John Hampton requests adoption of Morgan Lane to the road list as well as overgrowth cut off the right of way. He stated that he had been trying to get help with road issues for approximately 30 years and he had a petition from all residents. The problem that exists is that the road runs into US Forest Service property and is a Forest Service right of way. The biggest issue for my Hampton is the overgrowth of tree limbs, which the county can not fix because it is not a county road. There was more discussion after which it was determined that inspections would be done to see if the road was adoptable, and that Commissioner Hill would call the Forest Service and possibly Senator Phil Roe's office to request assistance with the overgrowth. Motion to postpone action on the issue pending further study was made by Commissioner Ward and seconded by Commissioner Dietz. Motion passed by acclamation.

Carter County Highway Department Committee Meeting of September 8, 2015

Chairman Hill was kind enough to send me his notes from the above highway meeting. The meeting was especially hard to follow with a great deal of nattering-Commissioners talking, audience talking, highway officials talking, and often all at the same time. Larry "Yogi" Berra the master of fractured syntax said "it is hard to carry on a conversation with everyone talking".

I have taken the notes from Chairman Hill as the minutes and added comments from my notes.

Item 5 concerning comments from Mr. Ken Gough about the bike trail which follows state/county roads as well as a portion of the ETWNC roadbed donated as Railroad Grade Road by the railroad from Hatcher to the Roan Mountain Community Park. Commissioner John Lewis pointed out biker safety issues along the route.

Under new business-Speeding on Blevins Road (3rd district) has resulted in 4 accidents on the same curve on a posted 25 mph speed limit.

Renfro Road off old Bristol Highway is a dead end-10 foot wide accepted to the road listing several years ago. The dead end road is steep and winding and would need additional donated right of way to bring the road to width requirements.

Citizens concerns: Mr. Randy McKinna brought to our attention the need to re-paint the faded highway divider striping on Cove Creek Road off state route 143.

Update: The small gravel washing into the road at Steve Bailey's cabins at Blevins Road/Von Cannon Drive may be solved as a neighbor paved his drive, the major source of the gravel. This still does not solve his storm water problem.

Mrs. Helen Hughes of 200 Hopson Road-Central Community, had complained of speeding vehicles running into her yard after failing to negotiate the 90 degree curve in front of her home. The highway department has placed curve warning signs.

Oct 5 2015 Date approved-Submitted by Chairman Hill/Charles Von Cannon

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Agenda item #5

Mr. Ken Gough, chair of the Parks and Recreation Board gave a brief update about plans to extend the Tweetsie Trail to the Roan Mountain Community Park.

Old Business

Commissioner Acuff updated the committee on Cynthia Fritts' proposed road adoption of Morrell Cemetery Road. A letter is drafted to go out to the property owners who we haven't heard from regarding the adoption, and copies of the letters are in the commissioner packets. No action was taken by the committee.

New Business

Commissioner VonCannon reported on speeding problems and 4 accidents that have occurred since August on the 25 mph posted ~~Blue Mountain~~ roadway. He stated that we must do something about speeding, and that more tickets need to be issued to cut down on the problem, and that the answer from Sheriff Lunceford regarding driver education was less than acceptable as a solution for the problem.

Commissioner VonCannon also reported on the Renfro Road issue Mr and Mrs Roger Berry reported at the last meeting. It has been discovered that there is an issue in acquiring proper right of way due to an estate probate issue. Mr. VonCannon stated that until the right of way issue could be resolved that there was no practical answer for them.

Commissioner Acuff reported that at the recent Town Hall Meeting held in his district, Mr. Kenneth Nave requested investigation of traffic and speeding issues on Pierce street. A "slow, children at play" sign was recommended as a possibility.

Report from Highway Superintendent

Mr. Burchett reported the findings on the drainage and runoff problems on Blevins Road reported by Steve Bailey and presented two proposed solutions: "plan A" with a cost of \$2127.00 plus labor = \$4254.00 and "plan B" with a cost of \$4016.00 plus labor = \$8032.00. Neither solution is currently within the limits of the Highway budget.

Some work has been done to improve Nave Hollow Loop, and the potholes noted by a Ms. Davis on Ruby Ave, Long Hollow and Jenkins Hollow have been filled.

Citizen Concerns

Randy McKinna raised the issue of fading road striping in the Burbank area, and asked when the lines might get re-painted. A timeline of less than three years was discussed, but Mr. McKinna was assured that his road was on the contract list for this repair. Mr. Burchett stated that the Highway Department was waiting to get funding for repainting lines, that it has to be contracted out, because the county has no painting machine.

Adjournment

Motion from Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Dietz to adjourn was passed by acclamation.