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The Carroll County Board of Supervisors held an Adjourned Meeting on Thursday, June 30, 2005 in the Board Meeting Room of the Carroll County Governmental Center.

Present were:        Brian E. Spencer, Chairman  
                              Glenna Myers, Vice-Chairman  
                              L. J. Jones  
                              Sharon F. Nichols  
                              Joseph H. Early, III  
                              W. Jeff Evans  
                              Ronald L. Newman, Acting County Administrator  
                              Bradley Dalton, County Attorney

Mr. Spencer called the meeting to Order at 5:40 p.m. and asked Marion Alderman to lead in the prayer and the pledge of allegiance.

Mr. Spencer thanked everyone for coming and then gave an opportunity for each Board member to speak.

Mrs. Myers told that she disapproved of what was published in the papers and stated that all Board members should have been asked before the other Board members signed the letter. She stated that she had questions about the lease but that she never had any intention of going back on the contract. She told that it was the Board's duty to the people to sign the contract. She stated that the county needs jobs that she wants more jobs and is happy to have AmerLink coming to the county. She stated however, that she is not happy with the way it went. She then stated that the matter should have been discussed before it was put in the paper.

Mr. Evans expressed his agreement with Ms. Myers in that he was upset with the headlines in Monday's paper. He told that there was no discussion that the Board was going to vote against AmerLink. He stated that there were some problems and that was what the Board was discussing. He stated that the Board needs to work together and that they cannot do that through the papers. He discussed that the paper was very hard on the supervisors and negative toward the county and that this sent a bad message. He explained that things had gone way too fast in the past few months and that the Board needed to be sure about what is happening before making a vote. He told that a contract had already been signed with AmerLink and the Board had to ratify it. He told that he hoped to hear each person and stated that it was their right to speak.

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Mrs. Nichols said that the guest editorial in the paper was appalling and brought dismay and confusion to the community. She told that the Board is the voice of the respective districts and of the county and should work hand-in-hand and with the IDA. She stated that this would bring jobs to the citizens. She told that the Board needed unity and not one or two causing friction. She stated that there is a lack of communication with the Board. She told that from speaking with Mayor Gravely he thought that the Board was against the AmerLink contract. She stated that the unemployment rate was high and that jobs were needed. She told that she was not against AmerLink.

Mr. Jones told that he agreed with what had been said but expressed disapproval about the give, give, give attitude. He told that he did not like some of the things that was in the contract.

Mr. Early stated that he does not find the truth appalling and is thankful to Carroll County and is happy about what is being done. He thanked Mr. Teller for his relentless efforts to bring jobs to the county and told that he was pleased to see the Board recommit to representing the people.

Mr. Spencer said that there is still a passion that exists amongst the Board members and that they are all still friends.

**PUBLIC HEARING –LEASE OF FARMER’S MARKET PROPERTY TO AMERLINK**

Mr. Spencer declared the Public Hearing Open at 5:50 p.m.

Mr. Dalton told that the purpose of this Public Hearing was to hear public comment concerning leasing a portion of the Southwest Virginia Farmer’s Market property to AmerLink. He told that the Board had previously agreed to this lease but that this Public Hearing was necessary because staff had noticed that there was not the proper time allowed for advertising the lease previously. He stated that the staff endorsed the granting of the lease on the property. He told the public that each person had three minutes to speak and then opened the floor for comment.

Mr. Richard Spoor thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak and thanked Mr. Teller for recruiting AmerLink to Carroll County and for his long hours of work. He told that he appreciated the Board’s support in recruiting AmerLink and suggested to the people that had come to speak on behalf of AmerLink that there be no long speeches.

Mr. Bill Steinoff from the Sulphur Springs District says that the news coverage has damaged the true facts and the county’s image. He told that according to the news coverage some view the meeting as an opportunity to either cancel or renegotiate the terms of the lease. He told that he hoped to

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learn the true facts from the Board. He said that he wanted answers on the county's liability if the lease is not approved and what the ramifications would be to the future tax burden. He stated that the citizens are entitled to a full explanation and reminded the Board that they have a fiduciary responsibility to the citizens.

Mr. Todd McDonald from the Laurel Fork district indicated that there is a letter or email that states the loss of the cannery to build Cracker Barrel would have to be compensated in the minds of the citizens. He told that he interpreted this to say that the Board was considering the citizens idiots and that the cannery would not be missed. He asked that the Board explain this to him.

Ms. Lisa Frazier from the Sulphur Springs district told that her concern was that the Board was asking AmerLink to leave. She said that most people just assume they will work elsewhere because there are not enough jobs here and this is something that must be straightened out. Because there are not any jobs here, she told that she has obtained and spent her money out of the county. She said she hopes to have more jobs in the area and be able to come back to the county to make a living. She said the Board should have worked out the problems before it reached this point.

Mr. Greg Crowder told that he was a business owner in Hillsville, and stated that he was sad about what has happened with Mr. Teller. He stated that this was a tremendous loss to the county.

Mr. Mike Goldwasser stated that he is glad that everyone is in agreement, but that it has really been clear that the Board does not get along. He said that having lived in the county for thirty-two years he has a lot of respect for the people and their work ethic. He told that he questioned whether the people who wrote the letter asked the other Board members if they wanted to sign it. He said that people here care about what happens and that the Board owes it to the people to not let the animosity get out. He told that there were people voting against something because a Board member was for it. He stated that the Board needs to change its ways and represent the people by getting along.

Ms. Sue Barnett told that she had been in Fancy Gap since 1995 and had watched while things tried to come into play. She told that she wanted to see the county come up to what it ought to be and that business be handled in a business way. She stated that the tax base is needed for the schools and the county needs to recognize this and come through. She told that AmerLink will bring a tax base to the area and that if the lease is not signed the teachers will really be hurt.

Ms. Brenda Quesenberry from Sulphur Springs district stated that she hopes that there are 200 jobs created for people who are in the county rather than

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bringing people in. She stated that she has noticed frequent references in The Gazette to special interest groups questioning the AmerLink deal. She told that while she was not a special interest group, she questioned who had the authority to offer AmerLink the perks they are receiving—special tax incentives, land, a 99-year lease, a water/sewer hook up, internet service, and reduced electric rates all pre-paid by the county. She told that she was worried that the artisans would be charged for space, and that the greenhouse lease would be terminated. She asked if lease termination was likely to happen to AmerLink and what happened to the plans to enlarge the Farmer's Market area. She told that above all she questioned who had the authority to offer these incentives. She suggested that the supervisors really should think before they approve spending taxpayer money and that they should take time for research so that they may understand why every Carroll County citizen is not willing to roll over and play dead while the powers that be spend taxpayer dollars irresponsibly.

Ms. Lucille Iroler explained that Mr. Teller was a great loss to the county.

Ms. Terry Cloud stated that Mr. Teller was a major loss to the county and told that she is happy that AmerLink is coming.

Brad Nester told that he supports the AmerLink arrangement. He told that jobs were needed and that there needed to be a hospitable business environment. He stated that it is hard to get all six Board members on the same page. He told that he supports Mr. Teller. He said that the citizens do not have a vehicle to be represented and that the actions of the Board do not represent the citizens. He said that many actions that have been taken are not what the majority of citizens really want. He told that this has led the citizens to be distrustful of the Board and suspicious of their decisions. He said that if this opportunity is rejected along with firing Mr. Teller, it could be catastrophic.

Ms. Sanna Walker from the Virginia Employment Commission told that she was speaking on behalf of the people out of work. She told that she supports more job opportunities as she has recently seen twenty-two unemployed citizens fill positions at AmerLink and expressed the importance of focusing on what is economically beneficial to the county. She said that once people get back to work this will allow for more economic development and for families to get back on their feet.

Mr. Larry Guyette, President of AmerLink, expressed happiness of being in Carroll County and gratitude toward the citizens. He said that the county is well on its way to having 200 jobs and that Hillsville is a very logical choice for AmerLink and its growth plan.

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Mr. Lonnie Vaughn said that although he did not want to have to move away from home, he has had to work away because of the lack of jobs. He told that he now works for AmerLink and stated that it would be foolish to not support the lease.

Ms. Kathi Mineer said that she fell in love with the county and the people who live here when she was visiting. She told that she came here without a job and found a job as a sales manager with AmerLink. She thanked AmerLink for coming to Carroll and said it was a blessing to the county.

Mr. Bob Martin stated how easy it is to have a miscommunication and stressed the importance of doing something to bring the Board together. He suggested that there are inexpensive people that can come in and work with the Board. He stated that the Board needs to do a better job of communicating and realize that the county needs industry.

Mr. Bob Ayers, told that he was originally from Mt. Airy and that he and his wife had searched for property in Carroll County for two years, and recently found property in Floyd County. He told that he was recently hired by AmerLink and he thanked AmerLink and the Board for bringing him a job.

Ms. Liz Beamer-Ferrell stated that the county did not get a chance to thank Mr. Teller before he was fired. She said that people never listened to her but that Mr. Teller listened to what everyone had to say. She asked that the Board listen to the people, acknowledge their opinions, and at least say they will check into it. She told that the Board needed to investigate what they were making a decision on.

Mr. Olen Gallimore stated that he had not read the lease but that the county had people that this was their job to do. He stated that he assumed AmerLink would own the buildings and said that AmerLink's taxes would pay for the upkeep. He told that he was a logger and stated that he hoped the price of logs went up. He thanked Mr. Spencer for listening and suggested that Mr. Teller run for the county administrator position as he has done such a good job.

Ms. Marjorie Dalton stated that she agreed with the previous comments and offered her support to AmerLink, stating that the county needs more jobs and new industry.

Mr. Peter Bramley told that he had lived in Chicago, Denver, and New York, and told that he retired to Carroll County because of what the county offers: safety, security, the culture, the people, and the opportunity to volunteer. He talked about helping to set up Blue Ridge Host and the importance of citizens volunteering. He stated that if there was anything he could do to make things work for the good of Carroll County the Board could give him a call.

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Mr. Waverly Dalton told that the county needed industry and that the Board must unite. He told that he has lived all his life in Carroll County but has driven to Montgomery County to work for thirty-two years. He stated that the publicity the county has been receiving is not what the county wants other industries to view if they are interested in locating here. He told that this causes them to not be interested in Carroll County.

Mrs. Donna Perry, Brady's Produce, told that she was pleased with the progress of AmerLink but told that she was concerned with AmerLink having a say-so in further development of the Farmer's Market property. She told that this should be under the control of the Board, the Administrator, and the Market Manager as long as it is not detrimental to the company. She said she worries about hurried decisions and future development of the property. She said she would like to see everyday business continue to increase. She stated that there were people in the county who were trying to sabotage the Board because they knew of things earlier on but did not bring them up until now. She told that she supported the airport, suggested the Board support it, and offered \$10.00 toward the airport.

Ms. Debbie Payne expressed support for the people who have not spoken. She discussed Rooftop and the Arts and Crafts Center, and told of the negotiations going on between Rooftop and AmerLink. She said she had understood that arts and crafts would be in the main building at no cost but that it did not look like there was enough room in the Tourist Information Center. She suggested that local arts and crafts people needed an avenue to display and sell items and told that this would bring money into the area and support the people of the area. She stated that she did not believe that Rooftop will go through with the deal and told that she would like to see AmerLink go through with it.

Mr. Craig Teller informed Mr. Jones, Mrs. Nichols, Mr. Evans, and Mrs. Myers that he would not be reapplying for the position of county administrator. He told the people that he took the situation in the county seriously, and explained that developers that are willing to negotiate are hard to find. He said that he tried his best to bring jobs to the area and never realized how hard it would be to develop the concept and find a company that would accept the concept. He said he hoped that the next administrator would be supported by the people and the Board, would not have to endure personal attacks for trying to help the people by bringing in jobs, and that the people would not attempt to find something wrong with him/her first thing. He expressed hopes for a brighter future and for community healing. Mr. Teller thanked the Board and everyone who has shown support for him. He stated that he hoped that the Board is aware of the ramifications of the decision that is being made tonight and how it will set the course for the remainder of the term and well beyond.

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Mr. Jay Botschen, told that when he was head of the Carroll County citizen's committee there were a few people in Richmond and the Park Service who wanted to control everything as far as they could see. He told that the committee did not give up and suggested that the citizens should not give up on citizen/government relations. He also expressed dismay at the way the county is displayed in the press.

Ms. Nancy Beasley stated that she was glad to see 200 jobs coming to the area and told that more jobs and higher paying jobs were needed. She told that business and industry would take the burden off of the citizens as far as taxes were concerned. She suggested that the Board work to mend fences. She said she hoped the Board would reconsider the airport expansion. She told that she was in favor of the expansion and that it would serve businesses, industries, and could serve the hospital. She told that she e-mailed the Board and that Mr. Early had responded to her. She stated that there was a need to bring jobs to the county.

Mr. Rob Agnew said that he had come to see what is going on in the county. He talked about being impressed with how professional Mr. Teller was the one time he met him. He expressed concern for the signal that was being sent and stated that he did not want to see the "good ole boy" network take over. He expressed excitement about an outside company coming in and bringing 200 jobs that will allow 200 employees to spend money in local businesses. He said that people should be willing to use local services and told that he is disappointed in the stand that some have taken. He said that the 200 jobs that would be created would be beneficial if this money was spent in local services.

Mr. Marvin Sharpe, a local tree farmer, said he was proud to have another logging company. He expressed fear upon reading the paper but was pleased to see that all the Board member had read the paper because he had assumed some of them were illiterate.

Mr. Ray Shepard told that he worked for Turman Log Homes and stated that he wanted to go on record again that he supported jobs in Carroll County but told that he still maintained that for the investment AmerLink could not provide 200 jobs. He asked how the jobs would be counted and asked if these would be direct employees or contract employees. He said he felt that things were done to ramrod this project through and that people outside the county would be employed on a contract basis. He stated that he appreciated good competition but that there were several log home companies in the area and he did not see how AmerLink would save the day. He stated that he felt that things were not done in the best way for Carroll County. He expressed that he felt that the IDA had been bypassed because an employee from Turman's was

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on the IDA but the employee offered to leave the meeting if it was considered a conflict and allow the other IDA members to discuss this but that they did not have this opportunity.

With no one else to speak, the Public Hearing was declared closed at 6:54 p.m.

Mr. Dalton informed the Board that a motion would be in order to ratify the lease approved February 9.

(Order)

### **RATIFY LEASE WITH AMERLINK**

Upon motion by Mr. Evans, seconded by Mrs. Myers, and passed unanimously, the Board ratified the lease between Carroll County, AmerLink, and Harlingen Holdings, Inc. that had been previously approved by the Board on February 9, 2005.

Mr. Evans stated that the Board had heard a lot from the people and that some of it had been harsh. He told that he did not take the position knowing everything but stated he would take a stand. He told that there was talk about the county healing but stated that the things in the paper were not helping. He stated that there were strong willed people on the Board and that they would not always agree on everything. He stated that things should stay out of the paper unless they were positive and if they were not the people needed to talk to the Board. He stated that this was destroying the county on the outside.

Mrs. Myers stated that she was disappointed that the IDA had not been included in this.

Mr. Jones stated that he did not like some of the agreements and told that he thought the county could have got a better contract.

Mrs. Myers welcomed Mr. Spoor to Carroll County.

(Order)

### **APPROVAL OF CLAIMS**

Upon motion by Mr. Evans, seconded by Mr. Jones, and passed unanimously, the Board approved the County General Claims as presented this day and as evidenced by check numbers 76940-76991.

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(Order)

**APPROVAL OF ENTRANCE SIGN – FARMER’S MARKET, TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER, LOG HOME SALES CENTER**

Upon motion by Mr. Early, seconded by Mrs. Myers, and passed unanimously, the Board approved Option A for the front of the sign and the back of the sign as presented for the entrance sign for the Farmer’s Market, the Tourist Information Center, and the Log Home Sales Center.

**SUPERVISORS TIME**

Mrs. Nichols told that she appreciated everyone coming to the meeting and stated that in the future the Board needed to work as a team.

Mr. Early thanked Mr. Spoor and stated that the county would not let him down.

Mrs. Myers thanked everyone for coming. She then told that the Carroll News reported that the airport vote was 4 to 2 when the vote was 3 to 3.

Mr. Spencer made the following statement: “ When I was released from the hospital 3 weeks ago, I was advised by my physicians both at Baptist Hospital and here in Galax, that my recovery was not complete, and that I would not have my usual energy or strength for up to a year and half. I was also told that I would benefit from alleviating as much stress as possible from my life, and that if there were any obligations I could eliminate, it would be in my best interest to do so. After much soul searching, and after many discussions with family and friends, I have come to the very difficult conclusion that I should resign from my elected office as Board of Supervisor at Large. I wanted to remain on the Board at least until all of the decisions pertaining to this fiscal year had been resolved, and in doing so, hoped to evaluate my own abilities to see if perhaps I would be able to remain in office until my term expired in 2007. I realized that I would be doing the office and the people of Carroll County a disservice because although I may continue to hold office, I would not be able to devote the time and attention that I have been giving, and that the County deserves. I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to serve on this Board and will miss working with this fine group of people. It will be up to the current board to select my replacement until the County holds elections in November. It is my hope that they will put as much thought into their decision about who would be best suited for this appointment as I did in making my decision to resign. I also want the people of Carroll County to know that I will continue to work as much as possible as a constituent to continue the progress we are making toward the County’s future. I will see to it

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that the Families for Fun and Fitness campaign will carry on and when my health allows, I plan to be as active as possible in community projects like the Historical Society, the County Fair and recreation for children.” He stated that his resignation would be effective at midnight June 30, 2005.

Mr. Dalton stated that the citizens will have a tough time filling Mr. Spencer’s shoes and told there would not be a replacement. He told that the Code of Virginia governs replacement for this position. He told that the first action would be for the Board to petition the Judge at the Circuit Court for a Writ of Election. He suggested that the Board authorize him to file for this immediately. He told that a special election would take place on the next general election to fill an un-expired term. He stated that in the interim the Board had the responsibility of appointing someone to fill the seat. He stated that this person must be qualified voter. He told that the Board must choose a replacement within 45 days or the Circuit Court will appoint someone at that time.

(Order)

**AUTHORIZE FILING WRIT OF ELECTION**

Upon motion by Mr. Evans, seconded by Mrs. Nichols, and passed unanimously, the Board authorized the County Attorney to immediately file in the Circuit Court for a Writ of Election for a Special Election to fill the unexpired term of the Supervisor At-Large position.

Mr. Evans asked if appointing someone at the next Board meeting would be soon enough.

Mr. Dalton replied that this would be sufficient time.

(Order)

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion by Mrs. Myers, seconded by Mr. Evans, and passed unanimously, the Board adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

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Chairman

Glenna Myers, Vice-

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Ronald L. Newman, Clerk