

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
JANUARY 3, 2012**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on January 3, 2012, 2:00 pm, Justice & Administration Bldg, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Jack Debnam, Chairman
Doug Cody, Vice Chair
Charles Elders, Commissioner
Mark Jones, Commissioner
Joe Cowan, Commissioner

Chuck Wooten, County Manager
J. K. Coward, Jr., Co. Attorney
Pat Parris, Clerk to Board

Chairman Debnam called the meeting to order.

AGENDA: Commissioner Elders moved to approve the Agenda. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

MINUTES: Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Minutes of the two Public Hearings and Regular Meeting of December 5, 2011, Public Hearing and Special Meeting of December 12, 2011. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(1) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Chairman Debnam gave a summary of Board actions during 2011.

(2) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS:** Commissioner Jones reported that on December 20, 2011 the Airport Authority was awarded a \$620,000 grant which will be used, along with some matching local funds, to widen the runway.

(3) **COUNTY MANAGER REPORT:** Mr. Wooten reported:

(a) **Employee Health Plan:** Crescent, the third party administrator, has analyzed the employees' health profiles and identified areas of concern that need improvement. The profile suggests there is an above average number of employees with hypertension, pre-diabetic, and obesity issues. Crescent and the Health Department will begin a series of educational classes to address these concerns. Presently, the health plan provides zero co-pay for prescriptions related to hypertension, smoking cessation, and diabetic medications and supplies. A proposal may be submitted for the new plan year that zero co-pays are contingent upon participation by the employees and their dependents in these education classes. As a self funded health plan, if there is not a better control for these diseases, then the only options are to reduce benefits or raise rates and neither of these options is the preferred outcome. A letter concerning this situation was delivered to each employee on December 23, 2011.

(b) Meth Labs: The Sheriff's Department continues to deal with meth labs with the most recent discovery being on Monday, December 26th. As previously discussed, the SBI is developing procedures to provide containers and central disposal locations for the labs. The original implementation date was to be January 1, 2012; however, the Sheriff's Dept. has now been notified that the date will be delayed until the end of February or the first of March. In the meantime, the County will continue to incur costs associated with the clean-up.

(c) Library Complex: The North Carolina Public Libraries Directors Association gave the new library the 2011 Outstanding Facility Award for new libraries in North Carolina which have more than 26,000 square feet. This is a compliment to the County for its financial commitment in constructing the facility for the citizens of Jackson County

(d) Town of Sylva: The Planning and Inspections Departments provide a number of services to the Town. Recently, two structures were inspected by the Building Inspections Director for possible condemnation because of serious deficiencies in the maintenance of these structures. The Town must decide on the action to be taken

(e) Board Retreat: A retreat/work session is planned for Friday, January 13th to review and discuss a number of issues and concerns the Board will be addressing during 2012. In addition, he proposed a second work session on Monday, January 23rd as a kick off to re-engineer economic development activities. David and Betty Huskins will be presenting a program on North Carolina Tomorrow which is a statewide initiative for a regional economic development plan for each region that will then be consolidated into a statewide plan. Region A is developing the plan for the westernmost counties which will provide an opportunity to prepare a strategic business plan specifically for Jackson County.

(4) CONSENT AGENDA: Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented six budget amendments in addition to a Capital Project Ordinance in the amount of \$1,158,401 for acquisition and construction of the Emergency Management Center Project.

Motion: Commissioner Elders moved to approve the Consent Agenda.

Commissioner Cody seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(5) AUDIT REPORT for FISCAL YEAR ENDING 6/30/11: Mitch Crisp of Dixon Hughes PPLC presented a summary of the audit report for fiscal year ending June 30, 2011. The audit reflects County assets exceeded its liabilities at the close of the fiscal year by \$51 million. The general fund balance reflects a decrease of approximately \$3.5 million (Cashiers Rec Center) in comparison with the prior year. 44% of that total amount (\$12 million) is available for spending (unassigned fund balance). At the end of the fiscal year, the unassigned fund balance for the general fund was approximately \$12 million and represents 23% of total general fund expenditures. The average fund balances for similar size counties in the state was 23.94%. The Local Government Commission recommends maintaining available a fund balance equal to at least 8% of expenditures. The report contains an unqualified opinion and the county is in compliance with all federal and state program requirements. The property tax collection was 95.11% which is slightly below the statewide average for comparable counties.

Motion: Commissioner Cody moved to accept the audit report. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(6) R & B LANDFILL, INC. CONTRACT: Chad Parker, Public Works Director, recommended that the R & B Landfill, Inc. contract be amended by extending the term from September 15, 2012 through September 15, 2017, eliminate the annual CPI adjustments, and waiving the 2011 CPI adjustment.

Motion: Commissioner Cowan moved to approve the amended contract. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(7) SURPLUS PROPERTY: Darlene Fox, Finance Director, submitted a list of various items to be declared surplus and authorized for sale:

Motion: Commissioner Elders moved to declare the items surplus posted for sale on Public Surplus and Commissioner Cody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(8) COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM RESOLUTION (R12-01): A Public Hearing was held at 1:45 p.m. on January 3, 2012 and no objections were made. The resolution is authorization to submit a grant application to the N. C. Dept. of Transportation.

Motion: Commissioner Elders moved to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Cowan seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(9) SOLID WASTE BY-LAWS RESOLUTION (R12-02): Chad Parker, Public Works Director, stated that the Solid Waste Board recommended that Article VI, Section 1 of the by-laws be amended as follows:

Section 1. Regular meetings of the Solid Waste Board shall be held on the second Monday of each quarter at the hour and place as shall be designated in the notice for the meeting.

Motion: Commissioner Cowan moved to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(10) CAPITAL RESERVE RESOLUTION (R12-03): Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented a resolution for the acquisition of property, renovations and equipment for a new Emergency Management office.

Motion: Commissioner Jones moved to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

INFORMAL COMMENTS:

(a) Lucy Christopher of Cashiers expressed her concerns for a 2012 revaluation and requested that it be delayed until 2015.

(b) Marie Leatherwood of Sylva stated her continued concerns about revaluation and urged that it be delayed until 2016.

(c) Allen Lomax, realtor, of Sylva, stated that because of the extreme recession in terms of real estate sales and the decline in cost of homes, a tax revaluation this year would harm the recovery of the real estate market.

(d) Avram Friedman of Dillsboro stated his concerns about revaluation because of the possibility that property taxes could be raised which will negatively impact lower income families and requested the Board to reconsider proceeding with revaluation in 2012.

(e) Carol Odom of Glenville requested that the Board move forward with the revaluation and everyone should contribute, not just the southern end of the county. Economic development should be looked at as to what is best for the entire county.

PRESS CONFERENCE

There being no further business, Commissioner Cody moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Attest:

Patsy C. Parris, Clerk to Board

Approved:

W. J. Debnam, Chairman