

**MINUTES OF A
WORK SESSION
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
APRIL 23, 2012**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Work Session on April 23, 2012, 9:00 am, Justice & Administration Bldg, Room A227, 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 work session to order.

(1) OCCUPANCY TAX: Mark Jones, Chairman of the Steering Committee, stated that one of the concerns of the committee is whether the county is in compliance with House Bill 96. He presented the committee's "talking points" for discussion:

(a) Authorize the continuation of the current assessment of a 3% occupancy tax. The legislation provides the opportunity to increase the tax above the current level to a maximum of 6%; however, the initial resolution is intended to only re-establish the current tax.

(b) Merge the Jackson County TTA and Cashiers TTA into a single entity to serve as a temporary board for the Jackson County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) until a final composition of the board is established and approved by the Commissioners. The Commissioners will designate a temporary chair person and this committee shall operate within the current TTA by-laws until dissolution. The Executive Director of the Cashiers Chamber of Commerce and the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce will provide administrative support for the temporary TDA Board. The final number of board members and the areas of representation for the permanent TDA Board will be in compliance with the House Bill 96, Part II. The permanent board will be established by the Commissioners and in place no later than January 1, 2013. The Commissioners will designate the initial chair person until the TDA Board can adopt by-laws and elect officers.

(c) The temporary board shall utilize occupancy tax funds only for the promotion of travel and tourism in Jackson County. In addition to spending funds for the promotion of travel and tourism, the Commissioners will set parameters related to expending funds for personnel, board member compensation, and capital improvements that are consistent with approved legislation when the TDA Board is established.

(d) On or before September 1, 2012, the Occupancy Tax Subcommittee shall submit a recommendation to the Commissioners for the TDA Board composition and a recommendation on a future increase in the occupancy tax rate to be effective January 1, 2013.

(e) The Occupancy Tax Steering Committee shall remain in effect no longer than December 31, 2012 at which time will be dissolved. If final recommendations to the Commissioners are completed earlier, then the committee shall dissolved upon presentation of a final report to the Commissioners.

Rep. Phil Haire was requested to address what options the County may have. He stated the Bill can be repealed and start all over again or it can be amended. One option would be an amendment delaying the effective date of the legislation to January 1, 2013; however, he would need to verify this option with legislative officials. Secondly, introduce some corrective language to get the county out of the grey area concerning collection and disposition of tax revenues since June 17, 2011, the date of the new legislation. The deadline for new bill drafting is May 23 in order to have it introduced by May 27. In any event and in order to get in compliance, a Tourism Development Authority (TDA) must be created. A temporary TDA board could be appointed to serve until the end of this year and if a permanent board has not been appointed by that time, the temporary board would become the permanent board.

Mr. Coward stated the bill writers have not responded to his questions concerning how much control the county would have over the TDA. Further, it is not clear whether the Board of Commissioners has the authority to appoint or remove members, set terms, approve budgets and expenditures, etc. He recommended amending the legislation to definitively address those issues. Further, the new bill does not state it repeals or supersedes the previous bill.

The consensus of the Board and sub-committee was to seek an implementation delay until January 1, 2013 to allow the sub-committee to complete its work and submit report to the commissioners.

(2) **BOARD OF EDUCATION:** Gwen Edwards, Finance Officer, gave a power point presentation explaining revenues and expenditures for FY2012-13. It is anticipated that state funding will be reduced \$178,668 and \$799,930 in federal funding. She requested local funding remain the same as allocated for the last fiscal year:

<u>Operating Expenses</u>	<u>\$ 6,779,482</u>
<u>Various Projects</u>	<u>235,000</u>
<u>Technology</u>	<u>397,500</u>
Total	\$ 7,411,982

In addition, she requested permission for the Board of Education to request financial assistance with emergency repairs that exceed \$20,000 and that funds be allocated to pay Cort Architectural for the development of a 5-year capital improvement plan.

(3) SOUTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE: Janet Burnette, Finance Officer, requested matching funds in the amount of \$580,000 to assist in renovations to the Cosmetology Dept. and build a food service court with a lounge. SCC has a one-time opportunity to reallocate state operating funds to capital outlay. In addition to matching funds SCC requests an additional \$97,000 in capital outlay for a total request of \$677,000. A request for operating funds in the amount of \$1,971,061 was also submitted.

(4) GOOD SAMARITAN CLINIC: Rebecca Olson, Executive Director, gave an overview of services provided by the clinic. In 2011, the clinic provided and/or coordinated over \$1.5 million worth of donated health services to qualified residents of Jackson County. The clinic provides significantly more health care value than it expends with a total budget of \$196,388. The clinic operates through a network of more than 100 volunteers, including physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, specialists and other community volunteer who donate their time and expertise. The clinic staff consists of 2 full-time and 2 half-time positions. Personnel costs for FY2012-13 will increase with the addition of a part-time salary for the Executive Director. The two full-time positions are funded by grants, but that funding will end on June 30, 2012. The remainder of the budget is from donations, fund raising, gifts and small grants. Ms. Olson requested County funding in the amount of \$134,204 for FY2012-13.

There being no further business, Commissioner Jones moved to adjourn the work session. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the work session adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Patsy C. Parris, Clerk to Board

W. J. Debnam, Chairman