

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
FEBRUARY 4, 2013**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on February 4, 2013, 2:00 pm, Justice & Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Rd., Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Jack Debnam, Chairman
Doug Cody, Vice Chair
Mark Jones, Commissioner
Charles Elders, Commissioner
Vickie Greene, Commissioner

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

Chairman Debnam called the meeting to order.

AGENDA: Chairman Debnam amended the Agenda by adding Closed Session, Real Property and removed Bear Lake Reserve Development Agreement Ordinance. Commissioner Elders moved to approve the amended Agenda. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

MINUTES: Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 22, 2013. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(1) COMMISSIONER REPORTS: Commissioner Jones stated that road salt is stored at a DOT station in the Canada Community; however, during the last couple of snow events DOT trucks returned to Sylva to reload and then returned to Canada. He contacted Todd Dillard, Emergency Management Director, and asked if he knew why there is not a backhoe or other equipment at the site to load salt on DOT trucks. Mr. Dillard contacted Mark Gibbs of DOT who is going to look into the situation and update Mr. Dillard. Mr. Gibbs stated that the salt at the Canada station is for environmental reasons; however, there is not a concrete pad under the salt - it is just piled on the ground and covered with a tarp.

Commissioner Cody reported that the VIPER tower at the airport was put in operation last week and is an important link to the future statewide communications system. He commended emergency management, grounds employees and everyone involved during the recent severe weather conditions.

(2) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT: Mr. Wooten reported:

(a) Regional Building Permit Trend Report: The annual report indicates that the County is starting to see a slow recovery in the residential and commercial construction activities. It appears the residential activity bottomed out in 2011 while 2012 had a 15.2% growth; however, the total residential permit activity in 2012 (121) was only 27% of the 2007 residential permit activity. There is a long way to go to return to a strong construction environment. On a positive side, excepting Buncombe and Henderson, Jackson issued more residential building permits in 2012 than any of the other westernmost counties. Jackson also saw an increase in commercial building permit activity. During the 4th quarter of 2012, 16 commercial permits were issued, 8 for new construction and 8 for remodeling.

(b) Regional Labor Market Information: Information was compiled and distributed by Region A that provides various labor market statistical information about the seven westernmost counties. As a region, Jackson County's October 2012 unemployment rate was 9.1% as compared to the state average of 8.8%. On January 29th, the NC Department of Commerce released the unemployment rates for December 2012. Jackson County's unemployment rate for December was 9.6% which is 1% higher than November but slightly less than December 2011. All counties in Region A saw increases in their unemployment rates ranging from .2% to 3.1%.

(c) Parks and Recreation Trust Fund: The grant application for the greenway project (pedestrian bridge) has been submitted. If funded, this grant combined with existing County funds would allow construction of a pedestrian bridge and the first phase of the greenway project. This project, in conjunction with the recently approved lease with Duke Energy for the Locust Creek/Rolling Green river access, would provide the community with another outstanding recreational opportunity. The grant awards will be announced in early summer and are highly competitive.

(d) 441 Landslide Update: Commissioners Elders and Jones, Todd Dillard and he attended a meeting with U.S. Park officials to tour the 441 slide site and hear about plans for recovery. The event was attended by other local government officials from Swain County, the Chief and Tribal Council members, NCDOT officials, Senator Davis, Congressman Meadows and representatives from both U.S. Senators in North Carolina. Work will begin immediately on stabilizing the slide area by removing unstable materials in preparation for the restoration activities. The park official anticipates the re-opening of the road in early June 2013.

(e) 2013 Tax Value: The Tax Supervisor has now completed compilation of the 2013 tax base. The County has realized a net increase of \$88,395,000 in the tax base. Under the current tax rate of \$.28 per \$100 this would generate a gross increase in tax revenue of \$247,506.

(f) FY 2013-14 Budget Calendar: This will be a topic at the February work session for some directions to staff in preparation of the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

(g) Director of Dept. on Aging: Finalists have been identified by the search committee. Commissioner Jones, three representatives from the Council on Aging, Danielle Wittekind and he served as the search committee. The goal is to complete the interview process and have a recommendation to the Commissioners on February 18th.

(h) City/County Managers Winter Meeting: He will be attending the winter meeting of NC Association of City/County Managers in Raleigh on February 6 – 8th.

(i) Renovations to the former maintenance facility in Dillsboro: Work is underway to obtain informal bids for renovation of the building so the transit department can relocate. This location will provide a more secure space for transit vehicles as well as space for administrative offices.

(j) Work Session: February 18th at 2:00 p.m.

(3) BUDGET AMENDMENTS: Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented three budget amendments for approval.

Motion: Commissioner Cody moved to approve the budget amendments. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(4) AUDIT CONTRACT – FY2012-13: Dixon, Hughes & Goodman submitted a contract and engagement letter for the audit period beginning July 1, 2012 and ending June 30, 2013. The audit fee is \$58,200 plus \$18,000 for preparation of financial statements for a total of \$76,000, an increase of \$2,000 from last year.

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

(4) HOME DELIVERED & CONGREGATE MEALS: Karen Davis, Nutrition Program Manager, presented an update concerning potential ways to cut costs or save money for the Congregate Meals program.

(a) **Congregate Meals:** Grant funds cover costs for 50 meals per day, but the current average for is 67. An additional \$14,000 is needed to continue the meals at the current average through June 2013. It is within the county's jurisdiction to actually prioritize this service based on eligibility over and beyond what the federal guidelines regulate. Two options were presented for consideration:

- Create a waiting list and only add a new client when a current client discontinues the service.
- Prioritize service based on client income and nutritional health as follows:
 - High risk score-----eligible for service
 - Moderate risk score --eligible if resources are available
 - Low risk score ----- ineligible but with option to privately pay
(Current clients with low risk scores would be terminated)

Motion: Commissioner Greene moved to authorize the Dept. on Aging to implement a priority system based on eligibility for the Congregate Meals program. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(b) **Meals on Wheels:** Current funding only covers costs for 80 older adults per day and there is a waiting list of 43. An additional \$15,000 will provide meals for 30 more people through June 2013. This program relies on volunteers for meal delivery and an additional 30 can be added to current routes. In order to add the remaining 13 on the waiting list would require an additional delivery route and the purchase of a vehicle to deliver those meals. She requested that funding be appropriated for this program because this service is for high risk older adults. Between the two programs, the most vulnerable is Meals on Wheels.

***Motion:** Commissioner Jones moved to appropriate up to \$29,000 from the contingency fund, \$15,000 of which is for the purpose of adding 30 clients to the Meals on Wheels program. Further, additional funding for the Congregate Meals program will be on an “as needed” basis and requests must be submitted to the finance office. Commissioner Cody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(4) **MUD SLIDE REPORT:** Tony Elders, Permitting & Code Enforcement Director, presented a summary and photos of slide activity throughout the county during the week of January 14-18 due to heavy rains. Portions of the county received as much as 16 inches of rain in a 72 hour period which contributed to multiple slope failures. Staff visited each site where problems were reported. At every location, slope percentages were measured with field inclinometer devices at the initiation zone for each slide. These measurements are generally more accurate than aerial photography and contour lines can produce on the computer. The lowest average slope registered at a slope failure was 65 to 70%.

(a) **Mountain Heritage Estates/Preserve:** The slide began at an abandoned roadbed at the top of the development. During construction the developer did not complete this section of road due to encountering solid rock. The site was seeded, matted, and stabilized in 2009. The slope of the terrain at the initiation zone is an average of 95% as observed by field measurements. He presented a field report and email from Mr. Rick Wooten with the NC Landslide Mapping Project. The report reflects that the average slope from top to bottom of the debris flow appears to be 34%. This is due to the relatively flat area for the bottom half of the debris flow where things settled out and came to rest. There was a documented small scale slope failure in the same area in 2009 when construction of the road was halted.

(b) **Dillard Rd. (Webster):** A slide on a cut slope behind a house under construction on Dillard Rd. along the river in Webster. There was no damage to the structure.

(c) **Dillsboro Villas:** A small slide on a fill slope below a house just above Hwy 441.

(d) **Coyote Trail -King Residence (Woodfin):** A slope failure on a fill slope below a private residence was reported. An old cross-tie retaining wall had failed. An engineer was brought in and repairs are already underway. The fill slope had an average slope in excess of 100%.

(e) **Sequoyah National Golf Club:** A small slope failure below Green #2 on the golf course above a small stream. The Site has been stabilized.

(f) **Monarch Drive (Woodfin):** A culvert was stopped up resulting in a wash out on the lower side of the road.

(g) **Indian Flats Drive:** A cut slope failure blocked a small private drive just off Cagle Branch Rd. The average slope of the cut slope was 70%.

(h) **Other Slides:** There were approximately 20 small bank slides or washouts documented along private drives. Most of these failures appeared to have been caused by stopped up culverts and ditches. NCDOT also reported more than 20 road bank slides along public roads.

(5) **R.E.A.C.H. CDBG GRANT #10-C-2232:** Gerald Green, Planning Director, reported that work has been completed on the project funded by a \$600,000 Community Development Block Grant awarded by the NC Dept. of Commerce. The grant was awarded to Jackson County and passed to Mountain Projects for the purpose of purchasing REACH Village. The CDBG grant, in conjunction with a grant from NC Housing Finance Agency, was used to purchase the property. The purchase was made on February 22, 2012. The property contains two apartment buildings, a community building and a single family 4-bedroom home for a total of 10 rental units. Mountain Projects has signed a legally binding commitment with Jackson County insuring that the units will remain affordable rental units for the next 20 years. Other work on the property included paving roads and parking lots, replacing playground equipment, refurbishing the vacant units, and clearing up the overgrown landscaping. The refurbished units are now being rented to qualified persons.

Pursuant to grant requirements, he requested that a public hearing be scheduled to close out the CDBG Grant #10-C-2232 project which is now completed.

Chairman Debnam scheduled a public hearing on February 18, 2013 at 5:45 p.m.

(6) **LEGISLATIVE GOALS RESOLUTION (R13-03):** The Resolution is in support of Legislative Goals adopted by the NCACC membership representing all 100 counties. The top five goals are:

- (a) Oppose shift of state transportation responsibilities to counties.
- (b) Reinstate ADM and lottery funds for school construction.
- (c) Oppose unfunded mandates and shifts of state responsibilities to counties.
- (d) Ensure adequate mental health funding.
- (e) Preserve the existing local revenue base.

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

(7) **CEMETERY BOARD**: Two of the three members whose terms have expired have agreed to continue to serve if reappointed.

Motion: *Commissioner Cody moved to reappoint Randy Cabe and Billie J. Bryson to 4-year terms on the Jackson County Cemetery Board. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

Informal Comments by Public: None

Press Conference

CLOSED SESSION:

Motion: *Chairman Debnam moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5) Real Property. Commissioners Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried.*

Chairman Debnam called the regular meeting back to order and stated no action was taken in closed session except approval of closed session minutes and to rescind the counter-offer to Emma Properties.

There being no further business, Commissioner Elders moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Attest:

Patsy C. Parris, Clerk to Board

W.J. Debnam, Chairman