

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
MAY 20, 2013**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on May 20, 2013, 6:00 pm, Justice & Administration Bldg., 401 Grindstaff Cove Rd., Room A201, Sylva, North Carolina.

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

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

Chairman Debnam called the meeting to order.

AGENDA: Chairman Debnam amended the Agenda by adding Governor's Crime Commission Grant, Library Board appointment and Smoky Mountain Mental Health Board appointment. Commissioner Jones moved to approve the amended Agenda. Commissioner Cody seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

MINUTES: Commissioner Elders moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 6, 2013. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(1) COMMISSIONER REPORTS: Commissioner Greene reported that a public meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, May 22nd, 1:00 pm at the Justice Center for the Tourism Development Board (TDA) consultant to present proposed "brands" for public comment. A final decision will be made by the TDA Board on June 6th.

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

(a) Meeting with Fire Chiefs to Discuss Fire Protection Tax: He met with the fire chiefs from all the volunteer fire departments last Thursday to discuss the process associated with implementing a fire protection tax. A list of action steps was provided before an item could be placed on the ballot in May 2014. In addition, the action steps that would be required for each fire department, if a vote was successful, in establishing a fire tax were also discussed. He requested that each chief talk with their members and provide Todd Dillard with feedback from those discussions.

(b) Business and Industry Advisory Board: The initial meeting of this Board was held on May 13th. Scott Hamilton and Tom Johnson from AdvantageWest provided an overview of the business recruitment activities in western North Carolina. They also answered a number of questions from board members about industrial sites, recruitment procedures, and the current interest from prospective businesses. A draft job description for an economic development director was also presented and briefly discussed. The Board did indicate a willingness to be involved in the recruitment process for this position if it is approved in the FY 13-14 budget. The Board will meet again in July.

(c) Veterans Report: Brenda Dubose, Veterans Officer, provided a report of activities within the Veteran's office for 2012 and the first quarter of 2013. The veteran population in Jackson County for 2012 was 3,097 and total expenditures from pension, medical care, etc. exceeded \$16.4 million. This office continues to provide a great service to the veterans and staff members are very pleased with their current office location in the Senior Center.

(d) Construction Projects: The rock building has been removed from Mark Watson Park and the site should be stabilized with seeding and straw in the next week or so. The renovation projects for Transit and Cashiers Senior programs continue to move forward and it is anticipated they will be completed by the end of June or soon thereafter. The Blue Ridge project is heading toward completion and the appearance of the Smoky Mountain project will be changing significantly as the steel and block for the gymnasium start to appear. The footings for the ECU Dental Clinic are in place and that building should be coming out of the ground soon.

(e) Economic Development Activities: He responded to two specific inquiries from AdvantageWest about the availability of commercial space. Hopefully, an opportunity will arise to show the old Tuckasegee Mills building as a possible site for a new industrial client. Both projects are in the assessment stage and a final decision has not been made about the property visits. He also plans to request a current survey on the commercial site owned by the County on W. Main Street in front of Diversified Exposition Services, Inc. in order to begin advertising this property for sale.

(3) CONSENT AGENDA:

Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented Finance, Tax Collector and Refund Reports for April 2013 and two budget amendments.

Motion: *Commissioner Greene moved to approve the consent agenda.*

Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(4) CULLOWHEE REVITALIZATION ENDEAVOR (CuRvE): Anna Fariello reported that CuRvE has been awarded a grant from Blue Ridge National Heritage to fund Phase I of Cullowhee's Tuckasegee Heritage River Corridor project. CuRvE sees this corridor as central to the revitalization of a multi-community area in the heart of Jackson County. CuRvE considers the Tuckasegee River as the area's core natural asset and requested funding for:

- Tuckasegee Blueway economic impact study.....\$. 6,000
- Promotion brochure, print survey, postage, advertising\$. 3,500
- 3 interpretive signs to educate the public about the importance of the river and the Heritage River Corridor \$. 5,000
- Project support..... \$. 5,000
- Tuckasegee Greenway feasibility study (county's match)\$ 20,000

Phase I includes the study, signage, and a brochure with a goal to educate the public and community partners about the possibilities of a river park and heritage river corridor. Phases II and III (not part of the proposal) include a feasibility study for the Tuckasegee Rive Park in Cullowhee and the integration and construction of various components that will complete the corridor.

CuRvE has partnered with the County Planning Department and Greenway Committee, Cullowhee Community Garden, Western Carolina University (WCU) Master Planning Task Force, and WCU Parks and Recreation Management Program. Other stakeholders and supporters include the neighboring communities of Webster, Dillsboro, and Village of Forest Hills, as well as the Land Trust of the Little Tennessee.

(4) REACH OF MACON COUNTY: Ann Van Harlingen, Executive Director, thanked the Board for its continued budget support. Mr. Wooten stated REACH has requested an additional \$5,000 for the current year. He urged the Board to favorably consider the increase because they stepped up to help Jackson County during a time of desperate need.

(5) FY2013-14 PROPOSED BUDGET: Mr. Wooten presented the proposed FY2013-14 Budget. The budget is balanced without any modification to the current ad valorem tax rate of \$0.28. There is a continued increase in the property tax base (\$72.7 million) and the collection rate (95.99% vs. 95.29%) which results in a \$218,254 increase in projected tax revenue.

(a) **Salaries:** A 2% increase for County employees. In addition, several positions were identified and are recommended for special adjustments to correct errors in classification, to acknowledge assignment of additional duties and responsibilities, to implement job reallocations, and to reward promotions

(b) **New Positions:** 4.5 new positions - an Economic Development Director, a clerical support position to be shared by the Economic Development Director and the Director of Human Resources, a School Resource Officer, a grant funded Mobility Coordinator in the Transit Dept. , and a receptionist at the Aging Center. The Aging position will be established by combining existing part time salaries and new funds to create a full time position.

(c) **Schools:** Funded as requested by the School Board plus one school resource officer.

(d) **Southwestern Community College:** A 2% increase in operating support and funds for capital needs as requested including the second year of the campus improvement plan. When combined with increases from the past two years, a cumulative increase of 16.06% has been allocated to SCC for operations; however, the proposed budget does not fully fund the community college request.

(e) **Fontana Regional Library:** 2% increase in operating support.

(6) FY2013-14 PROPOSED BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING: A public hearing was scheduled on June 3, 2013 at 1:30 p.m.

(7) CDBG NC TOMORROW GRANT (11-C-2267) CLOSE OUT: A public hearing was scheduled on June 3, 2013 at 1:50p.m.

(8) GOVERNOR'S CRIME COMMISSION GRANT: Mr. Wooten stated the Sheriff's Office, as part of the FY13-14 budget, filed an application for a Governor's Crime Commission grant to be used for the replacement and/or purchase of approximately 29 patrol car laptops and cradles. This is a \$60,000 grant with a \$20,000 local match for a total of \$80,000. Notification was received last week that the grant has been approved. The vendor will deliver the laptops and send an invoice after July 1, 2013 so the grant will be a part of the FY13-14 budget.

Motion: *Commissioner Greene moved to accept the Governor's Crime Commission Grant of \$60,000 with a local match of \$20,000 for new laptops for the Sheriff's Office. Commissioner Elders seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(9) TWSA – BY-LAWS AMENDMENT RESOLUTION (R13-14): Mr. Wooten stated the TWSA by-laws require approval by all appointing governing boards before the by-laws can be amended. The TWSA Board of Directors requests the County to adopt a resolution and ratification approving an amendment to Article V, Section 2, as follows:

The Authority may employ an Executive Director, who shall be its Chief Administrative Officer and shall serve under the supervision of the Board, subject to the Tuckasegee Water and Sewer Authority Personnel Policy in its most recent revision.

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to adopt the resolution and ratify the amendment. Commissioner Greene seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(9) PLANNING BOARD:

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to appoint Tom Rogers to fill the unexpired term of Sue Bumgarner on the Planning Board. Commissioner Elders seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(10) LIBRARY BOARD:

Motion: *Commissioner Cody moved to appoint Commissioner Greene to serve his unexpired term on the Library Board. Commissioner Elders seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(11) SMOKY MOUNTAIN MENTAL HEALTH BOARD:

Motion: *Chairman Debnam moved to appoint Commissioner Greene to serve his unexpired term on the Smoky Mountain Mental Health Board. Commissioner Elders seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

Informal Comments by Public:

- (a) Marie Leatherwood of Sylva expressed her disapproval of using tax money for a GSMR loan.
- (b) Sandra Dennison of Sylva stated that she, along with local business owners and others interested in economic development, have formed an association or partnership. This partnership is collaborating with the Town Manager, WCU Small Business Center, SCC Small Business Center, Jackson County Chamber and the Downtown Association. Through this partnership they are working with DOT for signage at Exit 83, historical brown road signs for the Town of Sylva, branding initiatives as well as events for the town and county. On behalf of the partnership, she thanked the Board for the decision to hire an Economic Development Director. The partnership supports smart community growth and offered their assistance in economic development.

Press Conference

There being no further business, Commissioner Greene moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Patsy C. Parris, Clerk to Board

W. J. Debnam, Chairman

