

**MINUTES OF A PUBLIC HEARING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
JUNE 3, 2013**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners held a Public Hearing on June 3, 2013 at 1:30 pm, Justice & Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, 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., Co. Attorney  
Pat Parris, Clerk to Board

Chairman Debnam called the public hearing to order and stated the purpose is to receive public input on the proposed FY2013-14 Budget and opened the floor for public comment.

**Public Comments:**

1. Stephanie Edwards, Executive Director of the Cashiers Area Chamber of Commerce and ex-officio member of the Jackson County Tourism Development Authority (TDA), stated the Chamber provides professional support to the TDA. The Chamber's request for contracted funding was unanimously approved by the TDA finance committee but was later unilaterally removed from the budget. During the FY13-14 budget development, she was requested by the TDA finance committee to provide detailed budget recommendations for both marketing and operational line item accounts. This was done and included an incremental increase for the Cashiers Chamber contracted services plus rent as the Jackson Chamber receives. The finance committee approved a budget that included rent to both Chambers and contracted services at basically the same rate. The Jackson Chamber receives approximately \$80,000 for visitor center rent while the Cashiers Chamber receives zero. Even though the Commissioners approval of the TDA budget is not required, the county is a stakeholder and retains fiduciary responsibilities for tax revenues. She requested the Board of Commissioners to support an amendment to the TDA budget to include rent to the Cashiers Chamber.

2. Debbie Hattler, Glenville, requested support for a TDA budget amendment as outlined by Ms. Edwards.

3. Mike Beck stated he was representing the seven fire departments, consisting of about 250 members, in requesting a 2% budget increase for operations. The departments have not had an increase in four years. Costs for equipment and parts have gone up and gear for members has become very expensive. Proper equipment and gear allows the departments to keep ratings up and during the past year 5 of 7 held their ratings which helped all the people with their insurance rates. The departments need to recover some of the costs because it is very expensive and in Sylva's case it cost them about \$38,000 for extra equipment.

4. Dottie Brunette, Librarian, requested a budget increase of more than 2% for the libraries and has received several letters and emails from library supporters. Everyone is very grateful for the support the Commissioners have given. In addition to being able to give some well deserved raises to the staff, more funding helps with the running and maintenance as well as continuing to be able to give superior service to the communities. The libraries bring in some economic development in the form of people who actually visit the libraries and stay over night in local establishments, eat in the restaurants and shop in the stores. The libraries enrich the lives of seniors, school children, preschoolers and the general public by providing services - many of which were not provided until the libraries were upgraded. She requested the Commissioners to consider raising the 2% appropriation so the libraries can be assured they can continue providing those services.

5. George Ware, Whittier, stated the Chambers of Commerce do a great job and work well with the TDA, but they are public non-profit organizations and therefore not required to release their budgets. He was surprised that even as a Chamber member he was not allowed to get a copy of the Chamber's budget. There are no delineations in the budget between Chamber designated funds and TDA generated funds. It is inappropriate to co- mingle public tax generated dollars with private/business generated dollars without public visibility.

Commissioner Jones asked how much 2% for the Fire Departments would cost. Mr. Wooten responded about \$15,000 - \$16,000 and contingency funds were set aside to allow any potential modifications the Board may choose to make. He suggested taking that amount from the contingency fund which would not impact the budget other than just reducing the contingency amount.

There being no further public comments, Commissioner Jones moved that the public hearing be adjourned. Commissioner Cody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Attested By:

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patsy C. Parris, Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
W. J. Debnam, Chairman